

## THE DIALECTICAL METHOD OF NĀGĀRJUNA

(Translation of the 'Vigrahavyāvartanī' from the  
original Sanskrit with Introduction and Notes)

### INTRODUCTION

In this short treatise<sup>1</sup>, Nāgārjuna shows all his dialectical skill in refuting the criticisms of a realist – a Naiyāyika. Nāgārjuna does not disdain logic. Why are all things 'void' (*śūnya*) or 'devoid of an intrinsic nature' (*niḥsvabhāva*)? Nāgārjuna's 'reason' (*hetu*) is that all things are 'dependently originated' (*pratītyasamutpanna*)<sup>2</sup>. But the best way for Nāgārjuna to refute his opponent's criticisms is to show the inner contradictions of the latter's thought and to use against him his own logic<sup>3</sup>. And that, I think, he does admirably well<sup>4</sup>. We find here, especially, a brilliant criticism of the *pramāṇas* of the Nyāya system, which occupies in this work the central position (vv. XXXI–LI).

Nāgārjuna strives to express the Inexpressible. All his expressions, therefore, are bound to remain inadequate. 'All things are void (or devoid of an intrinsic nature)' is not a "proposition" which denies or affirms something. By 'making known' the 'voidness' of all things (v. LXIV), it only expresses, indirectly, the Absolute, which is 'perfectly appeased' and 'isolated' from all its appearances (commentary on v. XXIX, and notes).

Nāgārjuna seems to be a mystic. But he is not a mystic who renounces thought and its expression in language. Along with all mystical philosophers, he knows that 'the ultimate in thinking as the ultimate in communication is silence'<sup>5</sup>. Like them, too, he uses thought in order to transcend it. It is only when by his inexorable logic he has been able to bring to light all the contradictions inherent in our relational way of thought, that he experiences Being or Nirvāṇa, which is beyond all relations, – in a shipwreck so to say<sup>6</sup>.

Nāgārjuna's Absolute is neither the world nor apart from the world. It is the 'intrinsic nature' of the world. But to say 'It is the intrinsic nature of the world', is to make of it an object, standing in relation, on one hand, to the thinking subject, and on the other, to other objects, and thus to deprive it of its all-encompassing character. The only way in which

Nāgārjuna can speak of it (or, rather, *out of* it) is to say: 'All things in the world are devoid of an intrinsic nature', i.e., the things in the world are not as they appear to us<sup>7</sup>.

Here Nāgārjuna had to face the objection: If all things are void, how can our activities in the world become possible? Even the religious discipline taught by the Buddha becomes meaningless. But this objection, Nāgārjuna replies, springs from a fundamental misunderstanding of 'voidness', i.e. 'dependent origination'. All our activities – religious or not – are possible only in this relational world of becoming. If 'voidness', i.e. becoming, is denied, then the world itself is assumed to be the Absolute, 'not born, not destroyed, immutable, free from the manifold states (of its becoming)'<sup>8</sup>. 'There is nothing to be done, no work is begun, the agent does not do any work'<sup>9</sup>.

Thus, Nāgārjuna neither denies the world nor affirms it. His is a 'middle path' (*madhyamā pratipad*), whence the name of his philosophy, 'Madhyamaka'<sup>10</sup>. It is in the world that he transcends the world and thus transfigures it. 'There is not the slightest difference between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*'.

'The difference between them is in *our way of looking at them*'<sup>11</sup>.

*na saṃsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣaṇam/  
na nirvāṇasya saṃsārāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣaṇam//*

*nirvāṇasya ca yā koṭiḥ koṭiḥ saṃsāraṇasya ca/  
na tayoṛ antaraṃ kiṃcit susūkṣmam api vidyate//* (MK. XXV, 19–20).

*Nirvāṇa* is *saṃsāra* without appearance and disappearance, without 'dependent origination':

*ya ājvaṇṇjavibhāva upādāya pratītya vā/  
so 'pratītyānupādāya nirvāṇam upadiśyate//* (MK. XXV, 9).

The reason why I decided to translate this text was that no complete translation of it from the Sanskrit original was available<sup>12</sup>, while there were already two translations based on the Tibetan and the Chinese versions. The authors of these two translations, Professors S. Yamaguchi<sup>13</sup> and G. Tucci<sup>14</sup>, were not fortunate enough to be able to use the Sanskrit original, which was discovered later in a Tibetan monastery by Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana; and, as will be seen, there are notable divergences between their translations and mine.

The text was edited for the first time by K. P. Jayaswal and Rāhula

Sāṅkṛtyāyana in an appendix to Vol. XXIII, Part III (1937), of the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Patna. The present translation is based on the improved edition by E. H. Johnston and Arnold Kunst in *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, publiés par l'Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, Vol. IX: 1948–51 (Bruxelles, 1951), pp. 99–152. It is to the labors of these two distinguished scholars that we owe now 'the possibly nearest approximation of Nāgārjuna's original text'. At places I have made some emendations; but I admire the patience and the sense of Sanskrit of these two scholars, to whose introductory remarks I refer the reader for further details about the text.

After I completed this work, in July 1970, I came to know of a work done on the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* by the veteran scholar, Professor Satkari Mookerjee (*Nava-Nālandā-Mahāvihāra Research Publication*, Vol. I, 1957). I am grateful to Professors B. K. Matilal and J. L. Masson, for having made that work available to me from the University of Toronto. Professor Mookerjee gives a brilliant exposition of the arguments of our text 'in a language and manner intelligible to the modern mind'. It is hoped that the literal translation presented here will be a useful supplement to that important contribution.

#### NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> I have not been able to find an adequate English expression for the title. In German it is rendered well: 'Die Streitabwehrerin' (E. Frauwallner, *Die Philosophie des Buddhismus* [Berlin, 1956], p. 199).

<sup>2</sup> *Infra*, p. 258, n. 2. – For Nāgārjuna, 'voidness' (*śūnyatā*) is the same thing as 'being devoid of an intrinsic nature' (*naiḥsvābhāvyā* and similar expressions). In order to avoid a misunderstanding of this essential idea of Nāgārjuna, it may be well to indicate here what he means by 'intrinsic nature' (*svabhāva*): 'Eigenes Wesen', writes Professor Frauwallner, 'bedeutet nach Nāgārjuna, der indischen Wortbedeutung entsprechend, ein Sein aus sich selbst und nur durch sich selbst bedingt, unabhängig von allem andern. Daraus folgt aber, dass ein solches eigenes Wesen nicht entstanden ist, weil es nicht verursacht sein kann, und dass es nicht dem Vergehen unterworfen ist, weil sein Bestehen von nichts anderem abhängt. Es ist daher ewig und unvergänglich. Und so folget denn Nāgārjuna, dass die Dinge der Erscheinungswelt, weil sie dem ständigen Werden und Vergehen unterliegen, kein eigenes Wesen besitzen können'. (Frauwallner, *op. cit.*, p. 173).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Candrakīrti, *MKV.*, p. 19: *idam evāsya spaṣṭataraṃ dūṣaṇaṃ yad uta svapratijñā-tārthasādhanaśāmarthyam iti, kim atrānumānabādhodbhāvanayā prayojanam?* – On this dialectical method, known as *prasaṅga*, cf. Murti, pp. 131–132.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Frauwallner writes about this work (*op. cit.*, p. 199): 'Es ist eines seiner

besten Werke und zeigt ihn in seiner ganzen Eigenart, vor allem in seiner unbeirraren Folgerichtigkeit'.

<sup>5</sup> 'Das Letzte des Denkens wie der Communication ist Schweigen', Karl Jaspers, *Vernunft und Existenz* (= *Aula-Voordrachten der Rijksuniversiteit te Groningen*, No. 1, 1935), p. 74. – Cf. *infra*, pp. 237–238, nn. 2–3 on v. XXIX.

<sup>6</sup> 'Im Scheitern das Sein zu erfahren', Jaspers, *Philosophie*, III (Berlin, 1932), p. 235. – Cf. Murti, p. 160: 'Negation is thus the despair of thought; but it is at once the opening up of a new avenue – the path of intuition... Śūnyatā is negative only for thought; but in itself it is the non-relational knowledge of the absolute'.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Jaspers, *Philosophie*, III, p. 234: 'Das Nichtsein allen uns zugänglichen Seins, das sich im Scheitern offenbart, ist das Sein der Transzendenz'.

<sup>8</sup> *ajātaṃ aniruddhaṃ ca kūṣaṭhaṃ ca bhaviṣyati/*  
*vicitrābhir avasthābhiḥ svabhāve rahiṭaṃ jagat|| MK. XXIV, 38.*

<sup>9</sup> *na kartavyaṃ bhavet kiṃcid anārabdhā bhavet kriyā/*  
*kāraḥ syād akurvāṇaḥ śūnyatāṃ pratibādhataḥ|| Ibid., 37. – Cf. infra, pp. 249ff., vv. LIV–LVI.*

<sup>10</sup> *yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatāṃ tām pracakṣmahe/*  
*sā prajñaptir upādāya pratīpat saiva madhyamā|| Ibid., 18.*

'Dependent Origination is that which we call Voidness. It is a mere designation based on something, and it is the Middle Way'. – Note the expression *upādāya prajñaptiḥ* 'a mere designation based on something' ('blosse Benennung auf irgendwelcher Grundlage', E. Frauwallner, *op. cit.*, p. 190). It is only an expression of the Inexpressible, based on the conventional truth (cf. *infra*, p. 236f, v. XXVIII).

The term 'Madhyamaka' is used by Nāgārjuna's followers as the name of the philosophy, while they call themselves 'Mādhyamika'. The non-Buddhist writers, however, invariably refer both to the philosophy and to its adherents as 'Mādhyamika'.

<sup>11</sup> Murti, p. 163.

<sup>12</sup> Professor Frauwallner has translated a few passages in his above-mentioned work, pp. 200–4. More recently, Professor Gnoli has translated into Italian the Kārikās only: R. Gnoli, *Nāgārjuna: Madhyamaka Kārikā* (Torino, 1961), pp. 139ff.

<sup>13</sup> *Traité de Nāgārjuna: Pour écarter les vaines discussions*, traduit et annoté par Susumu Yamaguchi, in *Journal Asiatique*, juillet-septembre 1929, pp. 1–86.

<sup>14</sup> *Vigrahavyāvartanī* by Nāgārjuna, *Translation from the Chinese and Tibetan Text*, in the author's *Pre-Diṇnāga Buddhist Texts on Logic from Chinese Sources*, Baroda, 1929 (*Gaekwad's Oriental Series*, No. XLIX).

## TRANSLATION

### I

#### OBJECTIONS

**I.** If an intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) of the things (*bhāva*), whatever they may be, exists nowhere (*sarvatra na vidyate*), your [very] statement must be devoid of an intrinsic nature (*asvabhāva*). It is therefore not in a position to deny the intrinsic nature [of the things].

Whether in the causes (*hetu*), in the conditions (*pratyaya*), in the com-

bination of the causes and the conditions (*hetupratyayasāmagrī*), or in a different thing, nowhere does exist an intrinsic nature of the things, whatever they may be. On this ground it is said that all things are void (*śūnyāḥ sarvabhāvāḥ*). For instance, the sprout is neither in the seed, its cause, nor in one of the things known as its conditions, viz., earth, water, fire, and wind, nor in the totality of the conditions, nor in the combination of the causes and the conditions, nor is it anything different from the causes and the conditions (*na hetupratyayavinirmuktaḥ prthag eva ca*). Since there is nowhere an intrinsic nature, the sprout is devoid of an intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*). Being devoid of an intrinsic nature, it is void (*śūnya*). And just as this sprout is devoid of an intrinsic nature and hence void, so also are all the things.

Here we observe: If this is so, your statement that all things are void, must also be void. – Why? – Because your statement is neither in its cause – the [four] great elements (*mahābhūta*), taken collectively or individually (*saṃprayukteṣu viprayukteṣu vā*); – nor in its conditions, the efforts made in the breast, the throat, the lips, the tongue, the gums, the palate, the nose, the head, etc. (*uraḥkaṇṭhausṭhahjihvādantamūlatālunāsikāmūrdhnaprabhṛtiṣu yatneṣu*); – nor in the combination of both [the cause and the conditions]; – nor again is it anything apart from the cause and the conditions. Since it is nowhere, it is devoid of an intrinsic nature, [and] since it is devoid of an intrinsic nature, it is void. For this reason, it is incapable of denying the intrinsic nature of all things. A fire that does not exist cannot burn, a weapon that does not exist cannot cut, water that does not exist cannot moist; similarly a statement that does not exist cannot deny the intrinsic nature of all things nor can it reject the intrinsic nature of all things. – In these circumstances, your statement that the intrinsic nature of all things has been denied, that the intrinsic nature of things has been rejected everywhere, is not valid.

II. Now, if this sentence (*vākya*) is endowed with an intrinsic nature (*sasvabhāva*), your former proposition (*pūrvā pratijñā*) is destroyed (*hatā*). There is a discordance<sup>1</sup>, and you should state the special reason for that [fact] (*tasmin viśeṣahetuś ca vaktavyaḥ*).

Now you may think, in order to avoid that defect (*mā bhūd eṣa doṣa iti*): this sentence is endowed with an intrinsic nature; being endowed with an intrinsic nature, it is non-void (*aśūnya*); thus the intrinsic nature

of all things has been denied by it, the intrinsic nature of all things (thus) disappears. To this we reply: If so, then your former proposition 'All things are void' is destroyed.

Your statement is included in all things (*sarvabhāvāntargata*). [Now] if all things are void, for what reason is your statement non-void, – that statement which denies the intrinsic nature of all things because it is [itself] non-void (*yenāśūnyatvāt sarvabhāvasvabhāvaḥ pratiṣiddhaḥ*)? Thus arises a controversial discussion in six points (*ṣaṭkoṭiko vādaḥ*):

How is it? [Here is how it is].

(1) If all things are void, your statement is void, being included in all things. [And] a negation by that [statement] which is void is a logical impossibility (*tena śūnyena pratiṣedhānupapattiḥ*). In these circumstances, the negation that all things are void is not valid (*anupapanna*). (2) If, on the other hand, the negation that all things are void is valid, then your statement is non-void. [But] that negation which it establishes because it is non-void, is not valid (*aśūnyatvād anena pratiṣedho' nupapannaḥ*)<sup>2</sup>. (3) Now, if all things are void, but your statement by which is effected the negation (*yena pratiṣedhaḥ*) is non-void, then your statement is not included in all things (*sarvatrāsaṃgrhīta*). Your proposition, there, is contradicted by the example<sup>3</sup>. (4) If, on the contrary, your statement is included in all things, and if all things are void, then your statement also is void. [And] since it is void, it cannot establish a negation (*śūnyatvād anena nāsti pratiṣedhaḥ*). (5) Let us then assume that it is void and that there is the negation by it (*atha śūnyam asti cānena pratiṣedhaḥ*): 'All things are void'. But, in that case, all things, though void, would be capable of performing actions (*śūnyā api sarvabhāvāḥ kāryakriyāsamarthā bhaveyuh*) – which is absurd (*na caitad iṣṭam*). (6) Let it be granted, then, that all things are void and that they are not capable of performing actions (*atha śūnyāḥ sarvabhāvā na ca kāryakriyāsamarthā bhavanti*); let the proposition be not contradicted by the example (*mā bhūd dṛṣṭāntavirodhaḥ*). In that case, however, the negation of the intrinsic nature of all things by your void statement is not valid.

What else? [The answer is:]

Thus, if your statement exists (*tadastitvāt*), there arises the following

discordance: some things are void, and some other things, non-void (*kiṃcic chūnyam kiṃcid aśūnyam*). And you should state the special reason for that discordance, explaining why some things are void, while some others are not. You have, however, not stated that [reason]. In these circumstances, your statement that all things are void is not valid.

<sup>1</sup> Yamaguchi's explanation of *vaiṣamikatva* by *viṣamavyāpti* is 'anachronistic', as pointed out by the editors (p. 109, n. 9). The word has the same meaning as the usual *vaiṣamyā*.

<sup>2</sup> For the statement is 'included in all things'. – This is certainly the correct interpretation, as suggested in the Edition, p. 110, n. 3 (and not that on p. 101). The Naiyāyika's objection here is closely related to that raised in the *Nyāyasūtras* 2. 1. 13–14, in connection with the Mādhyamika negation of the Naiyāyika *pramāṇas* (cf. vv. XXXI–LI below): *sarvaprāmāṇapratīṣedhāc ca pratīṣedhānupapattiḥ; – tatprāmāṇye vā na sarvaprāmāṇavipratīṣedhaḥ*.

<sup>3</sup> *tatra dṛṣṭāntavirodhaḥ*. – The proposition, 'All things are void', is contradicted by the example (*dṛṣṭānta*), 'The statement is non-void'. Since the statement is not 'included in all things', there can be no question of *all* things being void.

Moreover:

III. If you think that it is like 'Do not make a sound', [we reply:] this [analogy] is not valid. For with a sound that is existent is prevented here the other sound that will be [in future] (*śabdena hy atra satā bhaviṣyato vāraṇam tasya*).

You may think: When somebody says: 'Do not make a sound', he himself makes a sound and with that sound prevents the other sound; similarly, through the void statement that all things are void is prevented the intrinsic nature of all things. – To this we reply: This also is not valid. – Why? – Because here with a sound that is existent is negated the sound that will be. You, however, do not negate the intrinsic nature of all things with a statement that is existent. For, in your opinion (*tava hi matena*), the statement is non-existent, the intrinsic nature of all things is non-existent (*vacanam apy asat, sarvabhāvasvabhāvo' py asan*). Thus, 'It is like "Do not make a sound"' is a defective proposition (*viṣamopanyāsa*)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *viṣama upanyāsaḥ* is a favorite remark of Patañjali, author of the *Mahābhāṣya*. Cf. L. Renou, *Terminologie grammaticale du Sanskrit* (Paris, 1942 and 1957), s.v. *upanyāsa*.

Moreover:

IV. If you think that the same holds true of the negation of the negation (*pratiṣedhapraṣedha*), that also is false. It is your proposition which by virtue of its specific character is rendered defective (*lakṣaṇato dūṣyate*), not mine.

You may think: 'According to this very method (*anenaiva kalpena*), a negation of negation also is impossible; so your negation of the statement negating the intrinsic nature of all things is impossible (*tatra yad bhavān sarvabhāvasvabhāvapraṣedhavadacanam pratiṣedhayati tad anupapannam iti*)'. – To this we reply: This also is false. – Why? – Because the objection applies [only] to the specific character of your proposition, not to that of mine. It is you who say that all things are void, not I. The initial proposition (*pūrvakaḥ pakṣaḥ*) is not mine. – In these circumstances, your statement that, such being the case (*evam sati*), a negation of negation also is impossible, is not valid<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> According to the realist, the Mādhyamika commits the logical error of negating, through a void statement, the intrinsic nature of all things. The realist, however, does not commit any such error when he negates the Mādhyamika's statement negating the intrinsic nature of all things – for he does not hold that all things are void; his statement, therefore, is not void.

Moreover:

V. Now, if [you say that] you deny the things after having apprehended them through perception (*pratyakṣa*)<sup>1</sup>, [we reply:] that perception through which the things are apprehended does not exist (*tan nāsti pratyakṣam bhāvā yenopalabhyante*).

You cannot say that you deny all things in the statement 'All things are void', after having apprehended them through perception. – Why? – Because even perception, an instrument of true cognition (*pramāṇa*), is void, being included in all things (*sarvabhāvāntargatatvāt*). The person who apprehends the things (*yo bhāvān upalabhate*) is also void. Thus, there is no such thing as apprehension through perception, an instrument of true cognition (*tasmāt pratyakṣeṇa pramāṇena nopalaṃbhabhāvaḥ*); and a negation of that which is not apprehended is a logical impossibility (*anupalabdhasya ca pratiṣedhānupapattiḥ*). In these circumstances, your statement that all things are void is not valid.



You think, perhaps (*syāt te buddhiḥ*), that you deny all things (*sarvabhāvyāvartanaṃ kriyate*) after having apprehended them through inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*āgama*) and identification (*upamāna*)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Here and in the following verse are mentioned the four well-known Naiyāyika *pramāṇas* or "instruments of true cognition", viz., perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*āgama* or *śabda*), and identification (*upamāna*). [On the meaning of *upamāna*, adopted here, see A. Foucher, *Le Compendium des Topiques (Tarka-saṃgraha) d'Annambhāṭṭa* (Paris, 1949), pp. 148ff. See also Daniel H. H. Ingalls, *Materials for the Study of Navya-Nyāya Logic* (= *Harvard Oriental Series*, 40, Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 29, n. 6].

<sup>2</sup> Cf. preceding note.

To this we reply:

**VI.** In our refutation of perception, we have [already] refuted inference, verbal testimony and identification, as well as the objects to be established by inference, verbal testimony and identification (*anumānāgamasādhyāye' rthā dṛṣṭāntasādhyāś ca*)<sup>1</sup>.

We have [already] refuted inference, identification and verbal testimony, in our refutation of the 'instrument of true cognition' (*pramāṇa*), perception. Just as perception, an 'instrument of true cognition', is void because all things are void (*sarvabhāvyānām śūnyatvāt*), so also are inference, identification and verbal testimony void because all things are void. Those objects which are to be established by inference, verbal testimony and identification, are also void because all things are void. The person who apprehends the things through inference, identification and verbal testimony, is also void. Thus, there is no apprehension of things (*tasmād bhāvyānām upalambhābhāvaḥ*), and a negation of the intrinsic nature of things that are not apprehended is a logical impossibility (*anupalabdhānām ca svabhāvapratiṣedhānupapattiḥ*). In these circumstances, your statement that all things are void is not valid.

<sup>1</sup> I am tempted to correct here *dṛṣṭānta* into *upamāna*, which is as good metrically. Notice that in the commentary portion *upamāna* is used throughout.

Moreover:

**VII.** People conversant with the state of things (*dharmāvasthāvido janāḥ*) think that the good things have a good intrinsic nature (*kuśalānām dharmānām manyante kuśalaṃ svabhāvam*). And similarly with the other things (the bad things, and so on).

The commentary on this verse is a long list of 119 *dharma*s, which is of no interest to us here. Quite a number of technical terms used remain, moreover, uncertain. Cf. Edition, p. 113, n. 6, which refers to E. H. Johnston's article 'Nāgārjuna's List of Kuśaladharma's', in *Indian Historical Quarterly*, XIV, pp. 314–323.

In their Introduction (pp. 105–106), the editors observe: 'While the text is divided in two parts, 20 verses setting out the opponents' criticisms of Nāgārjuna's views and 50 verses giving his reply, the objections are not in fact all made by the same critic. The *dharmāvasthāvid* theorists of verse 7 are clearly Buddhist; though it is difficult to determine their school, the details in the commentary exclude the possibility of their being Sarvāstivādins, to whose theory of the *dharma*s much of the argument elsewhere would apply'. Professor Tucci holds the same view (*Pre-Diñnāga Buddhist Texts on Logic*, p. xiii). For my part, I am rather inclined to think that the author of this objection is the Naiyāyika himself, who uses against Nāgārjuna, a Buddhist, the standpoint of the Buddhist realists. (Cf. *infra*, p. 251, n. 1).

**VIII.** Those things which lead to emancipation (*nairyāṇika*) have an intrinsic nature that leads to emancipation (*nairyāṇikasvabhāva*). This state of things holds also for those things which are said not to lead to emancipation, and so on (*dharmāvasthoktānām evaṃ anairyāṇikādīnām*).

[The commentary gives an enumeration of the *dharma*s].

**IX.** If the things had no intrinsic nature, there would be an absence of intrinsic nature (*yadi ca na bhavet svabhāvo dharmāṇām niḥsvabhāva ity eva*). [But, then,] even this name ['absence of intrinsic nature'] would not be possible; for a name without an object [to be named] does not exist (*nāmāpi bhaven naivaṃ nāma hi nirvastukaṃ nāsti*).

If all things were devoid of an intrinsic nature, there would, nevertheless, be an absence of intrinsic nature (*yadi sarvadharmāṇām svabhāvo na bhavet tatrāpi niḥsvabhāvo bhavet*). [But,] then, even this name 'absence of intrinsic nature' would not be possible (*tatra niḥsvabhāva ity evaṃ nāmāpi na bhavet*). – Why? – Because there is no name whatever without an object (*nāma hi nirvastukaṃ kiñcid api nāsti*). – Thus, since the name exists (*nāmasadbhāvāt*), there is an intrinsic nature of the things; and since they have an intrinsic nature, all things are non-void (*aśūnya*). Your

statement, therefore, that all things are devoid of an intrinsic nature and that, being devoid of an intrinsic nature, they are void, is not valid.

Moreover:

**X.** Now [you may say:] There is an intrinsic nature, but that does not belong to the things (*sa ca dharmāṇām na vidyate*). There is, then, an intrinsic nature without the things (*dharmair vinā svabhāvaḥ*), and you should explain to what it belongs (*sa yasya tad yuktam upadeṣṭum*).

Now you may fancy: Let there be no name without an object; there is an intrinsic nature, but that does not belong to the things; thus, the voidness of the things because of their being devoid of an intrinsic nature will be established (*evaṃ dharmasūnyatā niḥsvabhāvatvād dharmāṇām siddhā bhaviṣyati*), and the name will not be without an object. – To this we reply: You should explain that object, apart from the things, to which now belongs thus that intrinsic nature (*evaṃ yasyedāniṃ sa svabhāvo dharmavinirmuktasyārthasya sa yuktam upadeṣṭum arthaḥ*). You have, however, not explained that. Hence your assumption (*kalpanā*): ‘there is an intrinsic nature but it does not belong to the things’, is ruled out (*hīnā*).

Moreover:

**XI.** Negation is seen to be only of an existent (*sata eva pratiṣedho... drṣṭaḥ*), as in the following: ‘There is no pot in the house’ (*nāsti ghaṭo gha ity ayam*). Consequently, this negation of yours is that of an existent intrinsic nature (*pratiṣedho’ yaṃ sataḥ svabhāvasya te tasmāt*).

It is only an existent object that is negated, not a non-existent one. For instance, when it is said: ‘There is no pot in the house’, it is an existent pot that is negated, not a non-existent one (*sato ghaṭasya pratiṣedhaḥ kriyate nāsataḥ*). In like manner it follows that the negation ‘The things have no intrinsic nature’ (*nāsti svabhāvo dharmāṇām*) is a negation of an existent intrinsic nature, not of a non-existent one. In these circumstances, the statement that all things are devoid of an intrinsic nature is not valid. By the very fact that a negation is possible, the intrinsic nature of all things is non-negated<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *pratiṣedhasambhavād eva sarvabhāvasvabhāvo’ pratiṣiddhaḥ*. Or, *-svabhāvaḥ prasiddhaḥ* (‘the intrinsic nature of all things is established’)? Cf. Edition, p. 116, n. 9 and v. LXI

below. – ‘Whenever we talk of negation or absence, it is relevant to ask of what the absence or negation is that we are talking about. Nyāya does not accept any such thing as ‘pure negation’. Thus, an absence, it claims, must be an absence of something. This something is termed the *pratiyogin* (the counterpositive) of the absence in question. In this respect the term ‘absence’ is comparable to the term ‘cognition’ (*jñāna*). An instance of cognition is also a cognition of something.

‘...Nyāya arrives at absence as a property by a hypostasis of denial. It interprets denials like “*a* is not there” or “*a* is absent there” as “there is an absence of *a* there.” Thus the absence of *a* is asserted as a separate entity, and *a*, the object of denial, is called the ‘counterpositive’. (B. K. Matilal, *The Navya-Nyāya Doctrine of Negation: The Semantics and Ontology of Negative Statements in Navya-Nyāya Philosophy* [= *Harvard Oriental Series*, 46, Cambridge, Mass., 1968], p. 52).

**XII.** If that intrinsic nature does not exist, what, then, do you negate by this statement? The negation of a non-existent is established without words (*rte vacanāt pratiṣedhaḥ sidhyate hy asataḥ*).

If that intrinsic nature does not really exist, what do you negate by this statement: ‘All things are devoid of an intrinsic nature’? The negation of a non-existent, e.g., that of the coolness of fire (*agneḥ sāityasya*) or of the heat of water (*apām auṣṇasya*), is established without words<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matilal, *op. cit.*, p. 54, n. 9: ‘Nyāya insists that the negate of a negation, i.e., the counterpositive of an absence, must not be an unexampled term. In other words, we cannot simply negate a term which has no denotation. To put it in another way, we cannot have an absence whose counterpositive is a fictitious entity’. The author cites Udayana’s *Nyāyakusumāñjali* III, 2. See also Dinesh Chandra Guha, *Navya Nyāya System of Logic (Some Basic Theories & Techniques)* [Vārāṇasi, 1968], pp. 112–113. Our passage seems to be an early and simple statement of this theory. See also B. K. Matilal, ‘Reference and Existence in Nyāya and Buddhist logic’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 1 (1970), pp. 83–110.

**XIII.** Just as ignorant people (*bāla*) wrongly perceive a mirage as water<sup>1</sup>, [and that wrong perception is removed by some person who knows, in like manner you may think that] you negate a wrong perception of a non-entity (*evaṃ mithyāgrāhaḥ syāt te pratiṣedhyato hy asataḥ*)<sup>2</sup>.

When ignorant people wrongly perceive a mirage as water, a scholarly person (*paṇḍitajātīyena puruṣeṇa*), in order to remove that perception, says that that mirage is without water (*nirjalā sā mṛgatṛṣṇeti*). Likewise, you may think that the statement ‘All things are devoid of an intrinsic nature’ is meant for removing people’s perception of an intrinsic nature in things that are devoid of an intrinsic nature (*evaṃ niḥsvabhāveṣu yāḥ svabhāve grāhaḥ sattvānām tasya vyāvartanārthaṃ niḥsvabhāvāḥ sarvabhāvā ity ucyata iti*).

<sup>1</sup> *mṛgaṭṛṣṇāyāṃ yathājalagrāhaḥ*. The compound *yathājalagrāha*, which also occurs in the commentary on v. LXVI below, is explained in the commentary on the present verse as: *jalam iti grāhaḥ*.

<sup>2</sup> On *pratiśedhyatas*, cf. Edition, p. 117, n. 7.

To this we reply:

**XIV.** But this being so, the aggregate of the six following things exists: the perception (*grāha*), the object to be perceived (*grāhya*), the perceiver of that object (*tadgrahitṛ*), the negation (*pratiśedha*), the object to be negated (*pratiśedhya*), and the negator (*pratiśeddhr*).

If this is so, then the perception of people, the object to be perceived, people who perceive it, the negation of that wrong perception, the object to be negated, viz., that wrong perception, and people like you who negate that perception (*pratiśeddhāro yuṣmadādayo' sya grāhasya*) – all these exist. The aggregate of the six is, therefore, established (*siddham ṣaṭkam*). [And] that aggregate of six being established (*tasya ṣaṭkasya prasiddhatvāt*), your statement that all things are void is not valid.

**XV.** You may think that there is no perception, no object to be perceived, and no perceiver. But, in that case, there is no negation, no object to be negated, and no negator.

If, in order to avoid that defect (*mā bhūd eṣa doṣa iti kṛtvā*), you say that there is no perception, no object to be perceived, and no perceiver, then even the negation of the perception, viz., the statement that all things are void (*grāhasya yaḥ pratiśedho niḥsvabhāvāḥ sarvabhāvā iti*), does not exist. The object to be negated and the negators, too, do not exist.

**XVI.** If there is no negation, no object to be negated and no negator, then all things are established, as well as their intrinsic nature (*siddhā hi sarvabhāvās teṣām eva svabhāvaś ca*).

If there is no negation, no object to be negated, and no negator, then all things are non-negated (*apraṭiśiddhāḥ sarvabhāvāḥ*), and they have an intrinsic nature (*asti ca sarvabhāvānām svabhāvaḥ*).

Moreover:

**XVII.** Your 'reason' [for establishing your thesis] has not been estab-

lished (*hetoś ca te na siddhiḥ*). How can there be, indeed, a 'reason' for you, when everything is devoid of an intrinsic nature (*naiḥsvābhāvyāt kuto hi te hetuḥ*)? And this thesis of yours which is devoid of a 'reason', cannot be established (*nirhetukasya siddhir na copapannāsyā te' rthasya*).

Your reason for the thesis that all things are devoid of an intrinsic nature has not been established (*niḥsvabhāvāḥ sarvabhāvā ity etasminn arthe te hetor asiddhiḥ*). – Why? – Because all things are void, being devoid of an intrinsic nature. How can there be thus a reason (*tato hetuḥ kutaḥ*)? [And] if there is no reason (*asati hetau*), how can the thesis devoid of a reason, namely that all things are void, be established? – In these circumstances, your statement that all things are void is not valid.

Moreover:

**XVIII.** If your negation of the intrinsic nature is established without any reason (*yadī cāhetoh siddhiḥ svabhāvavinivartanasya te bhavati*), my affirmation of the 'things' being endowed with an intrinsic nature is also established without any reason (*svābhāvyaśāstitvaṃ mamāpi nirhetukaṃ siddham*).

[The commentary is merely a paraphrase of the verse.]

**XIX.** Nor can you hold that the things' being devoid of an intrinsic nature is the existence of the reason (*atha hetor astitvaṃ bhāvāsvābhāvyam ity anupapannam*); for there is not a single thing in the world which is devoid of an intrinsic nature and [at the same time] existent (*lokeṣu niḥsvabhāvo na hi kaścana vidyate bhāvaḥ*).

If you think that the fact that the things are devoid of an intrinsic nature is the existence of the reason, [we answer:] that argument is not valid. – Why? – Because there is nothing in the world that is existent, while being devoid of an intrinsic nature<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> This is how I understand this passage. According to the editors (p. 120, n. 1), 'The argument is that "if you suppose that the cause exists in reality and that all things (which include the cause) are without essence (so that the cause is at the same time really existent and without essence)", that argument is not valid'. About the commentary sentence, *yadī hetor astitvaṃ manyase niḥsvabhāvāḥ sarvabhāvā ity, tad anupapannam*, they further observe: 'This sentence may not be in order; it would improve it to put *manyase* before *hetor* and add *ca* after *niḥsvabhāvāḥ*'. All that, it seems to me, is unnecessary.

Moreover:

**XX.** It is not possible to hold that the negation comes first and then the thing to be negated. Nor is it possible to hold that the negation comes after [the thing to be negated], or that they are simultaneous. – The intrinsic nature of the things is, therefore, existent (*yataḥ svabhāvaḥ san*).

It is not possible to hold that the negation comes first and then the thing to be negated. For, if the thing to be negated does not exist (*asati hi pratiṣedhye*), of what is the negation (*kasya pratiṣedhaḥ*)? Nor is it possible to hold that the negation comes after the thing to be negated. For, if the thing to be negated is [already] established (*siddhe hi pratiṣedhye*), what purpose is served by the negation (*kiṃ pratiṣedhaḥ karoti*)? Now [if you say that] the negation and the thing to be negated are simultaneous, [we answer:] even in that way, the negation is not the cause of the object to be negated, nor is the object to be negated the cause of the negation (*na pratiṣedhaḥ pratiṣedhyasyārthasya kāraṇam, pratiṣedhyo na pratiṣedhasya ca*), just as of the two horns<sup>1</sup>, grown simultaneously (*yugapadutpannayor*) the right horn is not the cause of the left horn, nor is the left horn the cause of the right horn. – In these circumstances, your statement that all things are void is not valid<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *śaśa*<sup>0</sup> in the text is an unnecessary addition to *viṣāṇa*, as the editors have rightly observed (p. 120, n. 9). – Cf. Candrakīrti on *MK.* XX, 7: *na caikakālayor savyetarago-viṣāṇayor janyajanakatvaṃ dṛṣṭam, vāmadakṣiṇakarayoḥ caraṇayor vā* (and *passim*).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Nyāyasūtra* II, 1, 12: *traikālyāsiddheḥ pratiṣedhānupapattiḥ*. – Vātsyāyana: *pūrvaṃ hi pratiṣedhasiddhāv asati pratiṣedhye kim anena pratiṣidhyate? paścātsiddhau pratiṣedhyāsiddhiḥ, pratiṣedhābhāvād iti. yugapatsiddhau pratiṣedhyasiddhyabhyānujñānād anarthakaḥ pratiṣedha iti*. As will be seen, Vātsyāyana's interpretation is a little different from that given in the commentary on our verse here.

## II

### [REPLY<sup>1</sup>]

[Refutation of the first objection]

**XXI.** If my statement does not exist in the combination of the cause and the conditions, or independently of them, then the voidness of the things is established because of their being devoid of an intrinsic nature (*sūnyatvaṃ siddhaṃ bhāvānām asvabhāvatvāt*).

If my statement does not exist in its cause and in its conditions...<sup>2</sup>, it

is devoid of an intrinsic nature and thus void. Now the voidness of this statement of mine is established because of its being devoid of an intrinsic nature. And just as this statement is void because of its being devoid of an intrinsic nature, so also are all things void because of their being devoid of an intrinsic nature. In these circumstances, your statement: 'Because of the voidness of your statement it is not possible to establish the voidness of all things', is not valid.

<sup>1</sup> In this part Nāgārjuna quotes all the verses translated above, and then gives his reply. I have thought it unnecessary to repeat them here.

<sup>2</sup> The commentary here is a restatement of what was said by the opponent in verse 1 above.

**XXII.** That nature of the things which is dependent is called voidness<sup>1</sup>, for that nature which is dependent is devoid of an intrinsic nature (*yaś ca pratītyabhāvo bhavati hi tasyāsvabhāvatvam*).

You have not understood the meaning of the voidness of the things. So you have set out to criticize me, saying: 'Since your statement is devoid of an intrinsic nature, the negation of the intrinsic nature of the things is not valid'. That nature of the things which is dependent is voidness. – Why? – Because it is devoid of an intrinsic nature. Those things which are dependently originated are not endowed with an intrinsic nature, for they have no intrinsic nature (*ye hi pratītyasamutpannā bhāvās te na sasvabhāvē bhavanti, svabhāvābhāvāt*). – Why? – Because they are dependent on causes and conditions (*hetupratyayasāpekṣatvāt*). If the things were by their own nature (*svabhāvataḥ*), they would be even without the aggregate of causes and conditions (*pratyākhyāyāpi hetupratyayam*). But they are not so. Therefore they are said to be devoid of an intrinsic nature, and hence void. Likewise it follows that my statement also, being dependently originated (*pratītyasamutpannatvāt*), is devoid of an intrinsic nature, and hence void. – But things like a cart, a pot, a cloth, etc., though devoid of an intrinsic nature (*svabhāvasūnya*) because of being dependently originated, are occupied with their respective functions, e.g., carrying wood, grass and earth, containing honey, water and milk, and protecting from cold, wind and heat. Similarly this statement of mine, though devoid of an intrinsic nature because of being dependently originated, is engaged in the task of establishing the being-devoid-of-an-intrinsic-nature of the things (*niḥsvabhāvatvaprasādhane bhāvānāṃ var-tate*). – In these circumstances, your statement: 'Your statement, being



devoid of an intrinsic nature, is void, and, being void, it cannot negate the intrinsic nature of all things', is not valid.

<sup>1</sup> *yaś ca pratītyabhāvo bhāvānām śūnyateti sā proktā.* – Cf. MK. XXIV, 18: *yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatām tām pracakṣmahe.* (*yaḥ pratītyādhīno sa śūnya uktaḥ, Anavataptahradāpasamkramaṇa-Sūtra*, quoted by Candrakīrti, several times. Cf. *supra*, p. 217.)

Moreover:

**XXIII.** Suppose that a person, artificially created (*nirmitaka*), should prevent (*pratiśedhayeta*) another artificial person, or that a magic man (*māyāpuruṣa*) should prevent another man created by his own magic (*svamāyayā sṛṣṭam*) [from doing something]. Of the same nature would be this negation (*pratiśedho' yaṃ tathaiva syāt*)<sup>1</sup>.

Suppose that an artificial man should prevent another artificial man occupied with something (*kaśmīṃścid arthe vartamānam*), or that a magic man created by a magician (*māyākāreṇa sṛṣṭaḥ*) should prevent another magic man created by his own magic and occupied with something. There, the artificial man who is prevented is void, and he (the artificial man) who prevents is also void; the magic man who is prevented is void, and he (the magic man) who prevents is also void. In like manner, a negation of the intrinsic nature of all things by my statement is possible, even though this statement is void (*evam eva madvacanena śūnyenāpi sarvabhāvānām svabhāvapratiśedha upapannaḥ*). In these circumstances, your statement: 'Because of the voidness of your statement, a negation of the intrinsic nature of all things is not possible', is not valid. In this way is also prevented the controversial discussion in six points that you spoke of (*tatra yo bhavatā ṣaṭkoṭiko vāda uktaḥso'pi tenaiva pratiśiddhaḥ*)<sup>2</sup>. This being so, [the following objections] 'my statement is not included in all things'; 'it does not exist, being void'; 'all things are not void, are not valid'<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. MK. XVII, 31–32.

<sup>2</sup> P. 222, above.

<sup>3</sup> *naiva hy evaṃ sati na sarvabhāvāntargataṃ madvacanam, nāsti śūnyam, nāpi sarvabhāvāḥ śūnyāḥ.* – Thus I read the text. According to the opponent, either the Mādhyamika's statement is not 'included in all things', and in that case some things are void and some others, non-void; or the statement, being 'included in all things', is itself void and thus non-existent and hence incapable of performing an action, viz., the negation. But the Mādhyamika says in reply that his statement is 'included in all things', being void like all other things. There can be no question of some things being void and of some others being non-void. It cannot be maintained, however, that the statement does not exist

at all: it exists in a certain manner – like the artificial man or the magic man. Though void, the latter prevent other void persons from doing something; similarly the statement, though void, can negate other void things.

Now about your statement [contained in v. II above]:

**XXIV.** This statement is not endowed with an intrinsic nature (*na svābhāvikaṃ etad vākyam*). There is therefore no abandonment of proposition on my part (*tasmān nāsti vādahānir me*). There is no discordance (*nāsti ca vaiśamikatvam*), and [hence] there is no special reason to be stated (*viśeṣahetuś ca na nigadyaḥ*).

Since my statement is dependently originated, it is not endowed with an intrinsic nature (*na svabhāvopapannam*). As previously stated, since it is not endowed with an intrinsic nature, it is void. And since this statement of mine is void, just as all other things are void, there is no discordance. For, there would be a discordance [only] if we said: This statement is non-void (*aśūnya*), while all other things are void (*śūnya*). We, however, do not say that. There is, therefore, no discordance. And since the following discordance, this statement is non-void while all other things are void, does not exist, we do not have to state the special reason (*tasmād asmābhir viśeṣahetur na vaktavyaḥ*): for this reason (*anena hetunā*) this statement is non-void while all [other] things are void. – In these circumstances, your statement: ‘There is on your part an abandonment of proposition, there is a discordance, and you should state the special reason’, is not valid.

[Refutation of the second objection: see v. III above.]

**XXV.** The example given by you: ‘It is like “Do not make a sound”’<sup>1</sup> is not appropriate. There a sound is prevented by [another] sound, but the case here is not just the same (*śabdena tac ca śabdasya vāraṇaṃ naivam evaitat*).

This example, moreover, is not ours (*nāpy ayam asmākaṃ dṛṣṭāntaḥ*). That void statement does not prevent voidness (*na śūnyatām pratiṣedhaya-ti*) as a person, when he says: ‘Do not make a sound’, makes a sound and [at the same time] prevents a sound. – Why? – In this example, a sound is prevented by [another] sound. But the case here is not the same. We say: all things are devoid of an intrinsic nature, and hence void. – Why?

<sup>1</sup> Cf. v. III.

**XXVI.** If things devoid of an intrinsic nature were prevented by something devoid of an intrinsic nature (*naiḥsvābhāvyānāṃ cen naiḥsvābhāvyena vāraṇaṃ yadi*), with the cessation of [their] being devoid of an intrinsic nature would be established [their] being endowed with an intrinsic nature (*naiḥsvābhāvyanivṛttau svābhāvyāṃ hi prasiddhaṃ syāt*)<sup>1</sup>.

This example would be appropriate if by a statement devoid of an intrinsic nature were prevented things devoid of an intrinsic nature – as by the sound: ‘Do not make a sound’ is prevented [another] sound. Here, however, by a statement devoid of an intrinsic nature is negated the intrinsic nature of the things (*iha tu naiḥsvābhāvyena vacanena bhāvānāṃ svabhāvapratiṣedhaḥ kriyate*). If by a statement devoid of an intrinsic nature were negated the things’ being devoid of an intrinsic nature (*yadi naiḥsvābhāvyena vacanena bhāvānāṃ naiḥsvābhāvyapratiṣedhaḥ kriyate*), the things, by the very fact of being negated in their quality of being devoid of an intrinsic nature (*naiḥsvābhāvyapratiṣiddhatvād eva*), would be endowed with an intrinsic nature (*sasvabhāvā bhaveyuh*). Being endowed with an intrinsic nature, they would be non-void. We, however, declare that the things are void, not that they are non-void (*śūnyatāṃ ca vayaṃ bhāvānāṃ ācakṣmahe, nāśūnyatām*). This, therefore, is a non-example (*adr̥ṣṭānta evāyam*)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *naiḥsvābhāvyā* is used here both as an adjective and as a noun. The first is derived from *niḥsvabhāva* ‘absence of an intrinsic nature’, and the second, from *niḥsvabhāva* ‘devoid of an intrinsic nature’.

<sup>2</sup> For the Mādhyamika, the opponent’s example is not appropriate. When one says: ‘Do not make a sound’, one prevents by the sound one makes another sound. The Mādhyamika, however, by his void statement, ‘All things are void’, does not negate other void things but only negates the things that we regard as *non-void*. There is thus no agreement between the two cases.

**XXVII.** Or suppose that an artificial person should prevent the false notion of somebody who takes an artificial woman for a [real] woman. This would be like that (*evaṃ bhaved etat*).

Or suppose that in an artificial woman, void of an intrinsic nature (*svabhāvaśūnya*), some man should have the false notion (*asadgrāha*) that it is really (*paramārthataḥ*) a woman and, as a result of that false notion, should feel desire for her. The Tathāgata or a disciple of the Tathāgata would [then] create an artificial man (*nirmitako nirmitaḥ syāt*), [and] the latter would dispel the false notion of that man, through the power

(*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the Tathāgata or of the disciple of the Tathāgata. Likewise, by my void statement, comparable to the artificial man (*nirmitakopamena śūnyena madvacanena*), is prevented the idea of an intrinsic nature in all things which are devoid of an intrinsic nature and comparable to the artificial woman (*nirmitakastriśaḍrṣeṣu sarvabhāveṣu niḥsvabhāveṣu yo 'yaṃ svabhāvagrāhaḥ sa nivartyate*). Thus, this is an appropriate example for establishing voidness, not the other one (*tasmād ayam atra drṣṭāntaḥ śūnyatāprasādhanaṃ praty upapadyamānaḥ, netaṛaḥ*)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *upapadyamāna* in this sentence is not so 'odd' as the editors think (p. 126, n. 13). See also the end of the commentary on the next verse. The word occurs also in other texts.

**XXVIII.** Or the reason (*hetu*) is similar in nature to the thesis to be established (*sādhyaśama*), for sound has no [real] existence (*na hi vidyate dhvaneḥ sattā*). We do not speak, however, without having recourse to the conventional truth (*saṃvyavahāra*).

The reason 'It is like "Do not make a sound"' is of the same nature as the thesis to be established – Why? – Because all things, being devoid of an intrinsic nature, are alike (*naiḥsvābhāvyenāviśiṣṭatvāt*). That sound, being dependently originated, has no existence by its own nature (*na hi tasya dhvaneḥ pratītyasamutpannatvāt svabhāvasattā vidyate*). [And] since it has no existence by its own nature, your statement that with a sound that is existent is prevented here the other sound that will be, is precluded (*vyāhanyate*). It is not, however, without having recourse to the conventional truth (*vyavahārasatya*), it is not rejecting the conventional truth, that we say: All things are void. For it is not possible to teach the absolute truth (*dharma*) without having recourse to the conventional truth. It is said:

'The transcendent truth is not taught without having recourse to the conventional truth. [And] Nirvāṇa is not attained without having recourse to the transcendent truth'<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, all things are void like my statement (*tasmān madvacanavac chūnyāḥ sarvabhāvāḥ*), and that all things are devoid of an intrinsic nature, follows in both ways (*ubhayathopapadyamānam*) [i.e., both by virtue of the 'reason' and of the thesis to be established]<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *vyavahāram anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate/paramārtham anāgamya nirvāṇaṃ nādhigamyate*|| (MK. XXIV, 10).

The absolute truth is beyond words (*anākṣara*). But it is taught 'through superimposition' (*samāropāt*), with the help of the conventional truth. – See Murti, pp. 232, 253.

<sup>2</sup> For the realist, when one says: 'Do not make a sound', a sound that is existent prevents another sound that is not existent, whereas the Mādhyamika's statement 'All things are void' cannot prevent anything, for it is itself void. To this the Mādhyamika replies that there is no sound that is 'existent'; the objection, therefore, is not valid. – The idea of *sādhyasama* will occur again when Nāgārjuna will take up the question of the possibility of a negation in the three times (v. LXIX). This is one of the several Naiyāyika technical terms used by Nāgārjuna in this treatise. See also *MK*. IV, 8–9, and Candrakīrti, *MKV.*, *passim*. It should be noted, however, that the Mādhyamikas do not use the term in the sense in which Nyāya uses it. The translation '*petitio principii*', found in the modern translations of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, is therefore inexact. (Cf. H. N. Randle, *Indian Logic in the Early Schools: A Study of the Nyāyadarśana in its relation to the early Logic of other schools* [Oxford University Press, 1930], p. 15, n. 3).

Now about your statement [contained in v. IV]:

**XXIX**<sup>1</sup>. If I had any proposition (*pratijñā*), this defect (*doṣa*) would be mine. I have, however, no proposition (*nāsti ca mama pratijñā*). Therefore, there is no defect that is mine (*tasmān naivāsti me doṣaḥ*).

If I had any proposition, then the defect previously stated by you would be mine, because it would affect the specific character of my proposition (*mama pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptatvāt*). [But] I have no proposition. Thus [we observe:] When all things are void, perfectly appeased and by nature isolated<sup>2</sup>, how can there be a proposition? How can something assume the specific character of a proposition (*kutaḥ pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptiḥ*)? And, how can there be a defect, caused by the assumption of the specific character of a proposition (*kutaḥ pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptikṛto doṣaḥ*)? – In these circumstances, your statement: 'The defect is only yours because it applies to the specific character of your proposition', is not valid<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> This and the following verse are quoted by Candrakīrti, *MKV.*, p. 16 (cf. p. 30).

<sup>2</sup> *śūnyeṣv atyantopāśānteṣu prakṛtīvivikteṣu*. – The things' being devoid of an intrinsic nature does not mean that they have no nature at all. In their essential nature (*prakṛti*), they are nothing but the universal and absolute Reality, which is 'perfectly appeased' (*atyantopāśānta*) and 'by nature isolated' (*prakṛtīvivikta*). That Nature, isolated from its appearances, is not, however, an entity that can be determined objectively. 'By their nature, the things are not a determinate entity. Their nature is a non-nature; it is their non-nature that is their nature. For they have only one nature, i.e., no nature (from the objective standpoint)': *prakṛtyaiva na te dharmāḥ kiṃcit. yā ca prakṛtiḥ sāprakṛtiḥ, yā cāprakṛtiḥ sā prakṛtiḥ sarvadharmānām-ekalakṣaṇatvād yad utālakṣaṇatvāt*. (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, p. 96, (ed. by P. L. Vaidya), Darbhanga, 1960). – The expression

*prakṛtivistika* occurs on the same page of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. Nāgārjuna uses the words *śānta* and *upaśānta* in the same sense. The Absolute is 'appeased', because it is not 'grasped', and hence not expressed in words. Cf. *MK*. XVIII, 9; XXV, 24.

In the Mahāyāna works, the Absolute is often spoken of as beyond 'grasping' (*upalambha*). Objectively speaking, it is 'non-existent'. But from its objective non-existence we should not conclude its metaphysical non-existence. On the contrary, its objective 'non-existence' is evidence of its highest metaphysical 'existence', its being 'not grasped' in an objective sense is evidence of its being 'grasped' in the highest metaphysical sense, i.e., beyond the subject-object split. We read thus in the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra*:

*yāvidyamānatā saiva paramā vidyamānatā/*

*sarvathānupalambhaś ca upalambhaḥ paro mataḥ* //(IX, 78; ed. by S. Lévi, Paris, 1907).

Cf. also Candrakīrti, *MKV*, p. 265: *avidyātīmiraprabhāvopalaḍḍhaṃ bhāvajātaṃ yenātmanā vigatāvidyātīmirāṇām āryāṇām adarśanayogena viṣayatvaṃ upayāti tad eva svarūpaṃ eṣaṃ svabhāva itī vyavasthāpyate... sa caīṣa bhāvāṇām anutpādātmakaḥ svabhāvo 'kiṃcittvenābhāvamātratrāḍ asvabhāva evetī kṛtvā nāstī bhāvasvabhāva itī vijñeyam*. [*Supra*, p. 217.]

<sup>3</sup> The Mādhyamika may say that, if in the realist's opinion he cannot deny with his void statement the reality of the things, the realist himself cannot deny the Mādhyamika's negation. To this the realist replies that the objection does not apply to him, for it is the Mādhyamika, not he, who holds that all things are void; his statement negating the Mādhyamika's negation is therefore not void. – But the Mādhyamika replies in turn that the realist's objection is not valid, for the Mādhyamika has no proposition of his own. 'All things are void' is not a "proposition". It only expresses the Inexpressible, with the help of the conventional truth – as he has already explained it in the previous verse. The real language here would be silence: *paramārtho hy āryāṇām tūṣṇīmbhāvaḥ*, Candrakīrti (*MKV*., p. 57; cf. Murti, p. 232; *supra*, p. 217).

[Refutation of the third objection; see vv. V, VI].

XXX. If I apprehended something with the help of perception, etc.<sup>1</sup>, then I would either affirm or deny (*pravartayeyaṃ nivartayeyaṃ vā*). [But] since that thing does not exist, I am not to blame (*tadabhāvān me 'nupalambhaḥ*).

If I apprehended something with the help of the four *pramāṇas*, viz., perception, inference, identification and verbal testimony, or with the help of one of these, then I would either affirm or deny. [But] since I do not apprehend any thing whatever (*yathārtham evāhaṃ kaṃcin nopalabhe*), I neither affirm nor deny (*tasmān na pravartayāmi na nivartayāmi*). In these circumstances, your criticism (*yo bhavatopālambha uktah*): 'If [you say that] you deny the things after having apprehended them through one of the *pramāṇas*, viz., perception, etc., [we reply:] those *pramāṇas* do not exist, nor do exist the objects to be obtained through them (*taīś ca pra-*

*māñair api gamyā arthāḥ*'), does not concern me (*sa me bhavaty evānupā-lambhaḥ*).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. vv. V–VI.

Furthermore:

**XXXI.** If such and such objects are established for you through the *pramāṇas* (*yadi ca pramāṇatas te teṣāṃ teṣāṃ prasiddhir arthānām*), tell me how those *pramāṇas* are established for you (*teṣāṃ punaḥ prasiddhiṃ brūhi kathaṃ te pramāṇānām*)<sup>1</sup>.

If you think that such and such objects – the ‘objects of true cognition’ (*prameya*) – are established through the ‘instruments of true cognition’ (*pramāṇa*), just as the things to be measured (*meya*) are established through the measuring instruments (*māna*), [we ask:] How are those ‘instruments of true cognition’, viz., perception, inference, identification and verbal testimony, established? If [you say that] the *pramāṇas* are established without the help of *pramāṇas* (*yadi tāvaṃ niṣpramāṇānām pramāṇānām syāt prasiddhiḥ*), then [your] proposition that [all] objects are established through *pramāṇas* is abandoned (*pramāṇato 'rthānām prasiddhir iti hīyate pratijñā*)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The Mādhyamika-Naiyāyika controversy on the *pramāṇas* is well known from the *Nyāyasūtras* II. 1. 8–19. Here we have the Mādhyamika’s own version of it. See on this question Murti, pp. 149ff.

<sup>2</sup> Because the *pramāṇas*, the ‘means of true cognition’, are also ‘objects’ (*artha*).

**XXXII.** If the *pramāṇas* (means of knowledge) are established through other *pramāṇas*, then there is an infinite series (*anavasthā*). Neither the beginning nor the middle nor the end can be established (*nādeḥ siddhis tatrāsti naiva madhyasya nāntasya*).

If you think that the ‘objects of true cognition’ (*prameya*) are established through the ‘means of true cognition’ (*pramāṇa*) and that those ‘means of true cognition’ are established through other ‘means of true cognition’, then there follows an infinite series. [Now] what harm is there in admitting an infinite series (*anavasthāprasaṅge ko doṣaḥ*)? – If there is an infinite series, the beginning is not established. – Why? – Because those *pramāṇas* are established through other *pramāṇas*, and those others again through other *pramāṇas*. In this way, there is no beginning. [And] if there is no beginning, how can there be a middle? how can there be

an end? – Thus, it cannot be maintained that those *pramāṇas* are established through other *pramāṇas*<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Nyāyasūtra* II, 1, 17, and Vātsyāyana's *bhāṣya* on it.

**XXXIII.** Now, if [you think that] those *pramāṇas* are established without *pramāṇas* (*pramāṇair vinā*), then your philosophic position is abandoned. There is a discordance, and you should state the special reason for that.

Now, if you think: those *pramāṇas* are established without *pramāṇas*; the objects to be cognized (*prameyāṇām arthānām*), however, are established through the *pramāṇas*, then your position that [all] objects are established through *pramāṇas* (*pramāṇaiḥ prasiddhir arthānām*) is abandoned. There is, moreover, a discordance, namely that some objects are established through *pramāṇas*, while some others are not (*keṣāṃcid arthānām pramāṇaiḥ prasiddhiḥ keṣāṃcin neti*). And you should state the special reason why some objects are established through *pramāṇas*, while some others are not. But you have not stated that. Thus this assumption, too, is not valid (*tasmād iyam api kalpanā nopapanneti*)<sup>1</sup>.

The opponent replies: The *pramāṇas* establish themselves as well as other things. It is said:

‘Fire illuminates itself as well as other things. Likewise, the *pramāṇas* establish themselves as well as other things’<sup>2</sup>.

[The commentary on this verse is just a paraphrase.]

<sup>1</sup> After having refuted the charge of ‘discordance’ (*vaiśamikatva*; v. II) brought against him by his opponent, Nāgārjuna here returns the same charge to his opponent.

<sup>2</sup> *dyotayati svātmānaṃ yathā hutāśas tathā parātmānaṃ  
svaparātmānāv evaṃ prasādhayanti pramāṇāni*||

The view put forward in this verse is in accord with *Nyāyasūtra* II. 1. 19: *na, pradīpaprakāśasiddhivat tatsiddheḥ*. This seems, at least, to have been the view of Gautama and of some of his followers. Vātsyāyana's interpretation is different. See on this point Professor Tucci's notes, pp. 36–37 (cf. Introduction, p. xxvii).

Here we observe:

**XXXIV.** This is a defective proposition (*viśamopanyāsa*)<sup>1</sup>. Fire does not illuminate itself, for its non-perception is not seen to be comparable to that of a pot in darkness (*na hi tasyānupalabdhir dṛṣṭā tamasīva kumbhasya*).



Your proposition that the *pramāṇas* establish themselves as well as other things like fire [that illuminates itself as well as other things] is defective. For fire does not illuminate itself. A pot, not illuminated by fire, is first not perceived in darkness. Then, being illuminated by fire, it is perceived. If, in a similar way, fire, not being illuminated, first existed in darkness, and then illuminated, it would be possible to say: it illuminates itself (*evam eva yady aprakāśitaḥ prāg agnis tamasi syād uttarakālam agneḥ prakāśanaṃ syāt, ataḥ svātmānaṃ prakāśayet*). This, however, is not the case. Thus this assumption, too, is not valid.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 223, commentary on v. III.

Furthermore:

**XXXV.** If, as you say, fire illuminates itself as it illuminates other things, then it will also burn itself.

If, as you say, fire illuminates itself just as it illuminates other things, then it will also burn itself just as it burns other things. This, however, is not the case. In these circumstances, your statement that fire illuminates itself as it illuminates other things, is not valid<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The subject cannot be the object of its own act. Cf. Śāṅkara, *Upadeśasāhasrī*, *padya* XVI, 13 (in *Minor Works of Śrī Saṅkarācārya* (ed. by H. R. Bhagavat) = *Poona Oriental Series*, No. 8, second edition, 1952):

*yaddharmā yaḥ padārtho na tasyaiveyāt sa karmatām|  
na hy ātmānaṃ dahaty agnis tathā naiva prakāśayet|*

Śāṅkara criticizes there the Buddhist idealists (Vijñānavādin), who hold that cognition is self-luminous, like a lamp. See also *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*, II. 2. 28. In his comment on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka - Upaniṣad* IV. 3. 7. Śāṅkara uses arguments which recall those used by Nāgārjuna in the preceding verse: *yat tūcyate, pradīpa ātmānaṃ ghaṭaṃ cāvabhāsayatīti, tad asat. – kasmāt? – yadātmānaṃ nāvabhāsayati tadā kīdrśaḥ syāt? na hi pradīpasya svato vā parato vā viśeṣaḥ kaścid upalabhyate. sa hy avabhāso bhavati yasyāvabhāsakasaṃnidhāv asaṃnidhau ca viśeṣa upalabhyate. na hi pradīpasya svātmasaṃnidhir asaṃnidhir vā śakyāḥ kalpayitum. asati ca kādācitke viśeṣa ātmānaṃ pradīpaḥ prakāśayatīti mṛśaivocyate.* (*Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series*, 15, Poona, second edition, 1902, pp. 568-9).

Besides:

**XXXVI.** If, as you say, fire illuminates both other things and itself, then darkness will cover both other things and itself<sup>1</sup>.

If in your opinion fire illuminates both other things and itself, then its

opposite (*tatpratipakṣabhūtaḥ*), darkness, too, would cover both other things and itself. This, however, is not seen. In these circumstances, your statement that fire illuminates both other things and itself is not valid.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *MK. VII, 12*:

*pradīpaḥ svaparātmānau saṃprakāśayate yadi/  
tamo 'pi svaparātmānau chādayiṣyaty asaṃśayam||*

Again:

**XXXVII.** There is no darkness in fire nor in something else in which fire stands (*nāsti tamaś ca jvalane yatra ca tiṣṭhati parātmani jvalanaḥ*). How can it [then] illuminate? For illumination is destruction of darkness<sup>1</sup>.

Here, in fire, there is no darkness. Nor is there any darkness in a place where fire is. Now, illumination is obstruction caused to darkness (*tamasah pratighātaḥ*). But since there is no darkness in fire or in a place where fire is, what is that darkness which is obstructed by fire, and by virtue of whose obstruction it illuminates both other things and itself (*kasya tamasaḥ pratighātam agniḥ karoti, yasya pratighātād agniḥ svaparātmānau prakāśayati*)?

The opponent replies: But is it not true that fire illuminates both other things and itself, for this very reason that there is no darkness in fire or in a place where fire is (*nanu yasmād evaṃ nāgnau tamo 'sti nāpi yatrāgnis tatra tamo 'sti, tasmād eva svaparātmānau na prakāśayaty agniḥ kutaḥ*)? For, in the very process of its origination, fire obstructs darkness (*tena hy utpadyamānenaivāgninā tamasaḥ pratighātaḥ*). If there is no darkness in fire or in a place where fire is, it is because in the very process of its origination fire illuminates both other things and itself (*tasmān nāgnau tamo 'sti nāpi yatrāgnis tatra tamo 'sti, yasmād utpadyamāna evobhayaṃ prakāśayaty agniḥ svātmanam parātmanam ceti*).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *MK. VII, 9*:

*pradīpe nāndhakāro' sti yatra cāsau pratiṣṭhitaḥ/  
kiṃ prakāśayati dīpaḥ prakāśo hi tamovadhaḥ||*

Here we observe:

**XXXVIII.** It is wrong to say (*asadvāda*) that fire illuminates in the very

process of its origination. For, in the very process of its origination, fire does not come in contact with darkness<sup>1</sup>.

The opinion that fire, in the very process of its origination, illuminates both other things and itself, is not tenable. – Why? – Because, in the very process of its origination, fire does not come in contact with darkness, and, since it does not come in contact with it, it does not destroy it. Since, however, darkness is not destroyed, there is no illumination (*tamasas cānupaghātān nāsti prakāśaḥ*).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. MK. VII, 10:

*katham utpadyamānena pradīpena tamo hatam/  
notpadyamāno hi tamaḥ pradīpaḥ prāpnute yadā//*

Light and darkness cannot coexist: *ālokāndhakārayor yaugapadyābhāvāt*, Candrakīrti on this verse.

**XXXIX.** If fire destroyed darkness even without coming in contact with it, then this fire, standing here, would destroy darkness in all the worlds.<sup>1</sup>

Now, if you think that fire destroys darkness even without coming in contact with it, then this fire, standing here at this moment, will equally (*tulyam*) destroy the darkness existing in all the worlds, without coming in contact with it. This, however, is not seen to be the case (*na caitad evaṃ dr̥ṣṭam*). Thus, your opinion that fire destroys darkness even without coming in contact with it, is not valid.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. MK. VII, 11:

*aprāpyaiva pradīpena yadi vā nihataṃ tamaḥ/  
ihasthaḥ sarvalokasthaṃ sa tamo nihanīṣyati//*

Furthermore:

**XL.** If the *pramāṇas* are self-established (*yadi svataś ca pramāṇasiddhiḥ*), then the ‘means of true cognition’ are established for you independently of the ‘objects of true cognition’ (*anapekṣya tava prameyāni bhavati pramāṇasiddhiḥ*). For self-establishment does not require another thing (*na parāpekṣā svataḥ siddhiḥ*)<sup>1</sup>.

[The commentary is merely a paraphrase.]

The opponent replies: What defect will ensue (*ko doṣo bhaviṣyati*) if the means of true cognition do not require the objects to be cognized (*prameyān arthān*)?

<sup>1</sup> On this and the following verses cf. MK. X, 8–12.

Here we observe:

**XLI.** If you think that the ‘means of true cognition’ (*pramāṇa*) are established independently of the ‘objects to be cognized’ (*prameyān arthān*), then those *pramāṇas* are *pramāṇas* for nothing else (*na bhavanti kasyacid evam imāni tāni pramāṇāni*).

If [you think that] the ‘means of true cognition’ are established independently of the ‘objects to be cognized’, then those *pramāṇas* are *pramāṇas* of nothing else (*evam tānimāni pramāṇāni na kasyacid pramāṇāni bhavanti*). Thus there is a defect (*evam doṣaḥ*). If, however, the *pramāṇas* are *pramāṇas* of something, they do not then become ‘means of true cognition’ independently of the ‘objects to be cognized’ (*atha kasyacid bhavanti pramāṇāni naivedānim anapekṣya prameyān arthān pramāṇāni bhavanti*).

**XLII.** [The opponent may reply:] If it is admitted that they are established in relation [to the objects to be cognized], what defect is there? – [The defect is that] what is [already] established is established [again] (*siddhasya sādhanam syāt*). For something that is not established does not require something else (*nāsiddho’ pekṣate hy anyat*).

If it is admitted that the ‘means of true cognition’ are established in relation to the ‘objects to be cognized’, then the four ‘means of true cognition’, which are [already] established, are established [anew]. – Why? – Because an object that is not established does not require [something else]. For instance, Devadatta, who is not [yet] established, does not require anything whatever. But it is not admissible (*iṣṭa*) that something that is [already] established be established [anew]. One does not do something that is [already] done.

Besides:

**XLIII.** If the *pramāṇas* are by all means (*sarvathā*) established in relation to the *prameyas*, the *prameyas* are not established in relation to the *pramāṇas*.

If the *pramāṇas* are established in relation to the *prameyas*, the *prameyas* are not established in relation to the *pramāṇas*. – Why? – Because the object to be established (*sādhya*) does not establish the instrument by which it is established (*sādhana*). The *pramāṇas*, however, are the instru-

ments by which the *prameyas* are established (*sādhānāni ca kila pramāṇyā-  
nāṃ pramāṇāni*)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> This is the ordinary view. But, if it is thought that the *pramāṇas* themselves are established by the *prameyas*, in other words, that they are *sādhya*s in relation to the *prameyas*, which are *sādhana*s, they cannot establish the *prameyas*, for the *sādhya* cannot establish the *sādhana*.

**XLIV.** And if the *prameyas* are established even independently of the *pramāṇas*, what do you gain by establishing the *pramāṇas* (*kiṃ te pramāṇasiddhyā*)? That whose purpose they serve is [already] established (*tāni yadārthaṃ prasiddhaṃ tat*).

[The commentary is just a paraphrase.]

**XLV.** Besides, if you establish the *pramāṇas* in relation to the *prameyas*, there is certainly a confusion of *pramāṇas* and *prameyas* (*vyatyaya evaṃ sati te dhruvaṃ pramāṇaprameyāṇām*).

Moreover, if you think, in order to avoid the defect stated before<sup>1</sup>, that the 'means of true cognition' exist only in relation to the 'objects to be cognized', there is a confusion of *pramāṇas* and *prameyas*. Your *pramāṇas* become *prameyas*, because they are established by the *prameyas* (*prameyairiḥ sādhitatvāt*). And the *prameyas* become *pramāṇas*, because they establish the *pramāṇas* (*pramāṇānāṃ sādhakatvāt*).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. v. XLI.

**XLVI.** Now, if you think that through the establishment of the *pramāṇas* are established the *prameyas*, and that through the establishment of the *prameyas* are established the *pramāṇas*, then neither the *prameyas* nor the *pramāṇas* are established for you.

Now, if you think that through the establishment of the *pramāṇas* are established the *prameyas* – because the *prameyas* require the *pramāṇas* – and that through the establishment of the *prameyas* are established the *pramāṇas* – because the *pramāṇas* require the *prameyas* – then neither the *prameyas* nor the *pramāṇas* are established. – Why? –

**XLVII.** Because, if the *prameyas* owe their establishment to the *pramāṇas*, and if those *pramāṇas* are to be established by those very *prameyas* (*sidhyanti hi pramāṇair yadi prameyāṇi tāni tair eva sādhyāni ca prameyairiḥ*), how will the *pramāṇas* establish [the *prameyas*]?

Because, if the *prameyas* owe their establishment to the *pramāṇas*, and if those *pramāṇas* are to be established by those very *prameyas* (*tāni ca pramāṇāni tair eva prameyaiḥ sādhayitavyāni*), [we encounter the following difficulty:] the *prameyas* not having been established, the *pramāṇas* are not established, for their cause (*kāraṇa*)<sup>1</sup> is not established. How, then, will the *pramāṇas*<sup>2</sup> establish the *prameyas*?

<sup>1</sup> I.e., the *prameyas*.

<sup>2</sup> Which themselves are not yet established.

**XLVIII.** And if the *pramāṇas* owe their establishment to the *prameyas*, and if those *prameyas* are to be established by those very *pramāṇas*, how will the *prameyas* establish [the *pramāṇas*]?

And if the *pramāṇas* owe their establishment to the *prameyas*, and if those *prameyas* are to be established by those very *pramāṇas*, [we encounter the following difficulty:] the *pramāṇas* not having been established, the *prameyas* are not established, for their cause<sup>1</sup> is not established. How, then, will the *prameyas*<sup>2</sup> establish the *pramāṇas*<sup>3</sup>?

<sup>1</sup> I.e., the *pramāṇas*.

<sup>2</sup> Which themselves are not yet established.

<sup>3</sup> In *MK. XXIII*, 10–11, Nāgārjuna argues in a similar way to show the hollowness of the ideas of good and evil:

*anapekṣya śubhaṃ nāsty aśubhaṃ prajñāpayemahi/  
yat pratītya śubhaṃ tasmāc chubhaṃ naivopapadyate||  
anapekṣyāśubhaṃ nāsti śubhaṃ prajñāpayemahi/  
yat pratityāśubhaṃ tasmād aśubhaṃ naiva vidyate||*

**XLIX.** If the son is to be produced (*utpādya*) by the father, and if that father is to be produced by that very son, tell me who, in that case, produces whom (*vada tatrotpādayati kaḥ kam*).

Supposing somebody said: the son is to be produced (*utpādaniya*) by the father, and that father is to be produced by that very son, tell me who is to be produced by whom (*kena ka utpādayitavya iti*). In like manner you say: the *prameyas* are to be established by the *pramāṇas*, but those very *pramāṇas* are to be established by those very *prameyas*. Now, which of these are to be established for you by which others (*tatredāntṛṇ te katamaiḥ katamāni sādhayitavyāni*)?

**L.** Tell me who is there the father, and who the son. Both of them bear

the marks of a father and of a son (*tāv ubhāv api ca pitṛputralakṣaṇadharaū*), wherefore we have a doubt here (*yato bhavati no' tra saṁdehaḥ*).

Of that father and that son, mentioned before, who is the son, and who the father? Both of them, as producers (*utpādayatvāt*), bear the mark of a father, and, as produced (*utpādyatvāt*), the mark of a son. We have a doubt here: which of these, there, is the father, and which other the son? Likewise, of these two [groups] your *pramāṇas* and *prameyas*, which are the *pramāṇas*, and which others the *prameyas*? For both of these, as that which establishes (*sādhakatvāt*), are *pramāṇas*, and, as that which is to be established (*sādhyatvāt*), *prameyas*. We have a doubt here as to which of these are *pramāṇas*, and which others the *prameyas*<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Pramāṇa* and *prameya* are relative terms. One exists only in relation to the other. They are 'dependently originated', and hence 'void'. In an absolute sense, there is neither any *pramāṇa* nor any *prameya*. The example of the father and the son indicates it. The father exists only in relation to the son, and the son exists only in relation to the father; in an absolute sense, there is neither a father nor a son:

*pitā cen na vinā putrāt kutaḥ putrasya sambhavaḥ/  
putrābhāve pitā nāsti tathāsattvaṁ tayor dvayoh||* (Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, IX, 114 (ed. by P. L. Vaidya), Darbhanga, 1960).

We should not conclude, however, that Nāgārjuna does not recognize any empirical validity of the *pramāṇas* and the *prameyas*, of the ideas of the father and the son, and so on. On the contrary, he would say, in accord with his doctrine of action (*supra*, p. 218; *infra*, vv. LIV–LVI), that it is their 'voidness' which establishes their empirical validity. If 'voidness', i.e. 'dependent origination', is denied, then they become the supra-relational Absolute, and thus annul themselves as such. – Cf. Candrakīrti, *MKV.*, p. 69.

**II.** The *pramāṇas* are not established by themselves (*svataḥ*) or by one another (*parasparataḥ*) or by other *pramāṇas* (*parapramāṇaiḥ*)<sup>1</sup>. Nor are they established by the *prameyas*, or accidentally (*akasmāt*)<sup>2</sup>.

Perception (*pratyakṣa*) is not established by that very perception, inference (*anumāna*) is not established by that very inference, identification (*upamāna*)<sup>3</sup> is not established by that very identification, and testimony (*āgama*) is not established by that very testimony. Nor are they established by one another, i.e., perception by inference, identification and testimony, inference by perception, identification and testimony, identification by perception, inference and testimony, and testimony by perception, inference and identification. Nor are perception, inference, identification and testimony established, respectively (*yathāśvam*), by another perception, another inference, another identification, and another testi-

mony. Nor are the *pramāṇas* established by the *prameyas*, taken collectively or individually (*samastavyastaiḥ*), each *pramāṇa* being established either by the corresponding *prameya* or by the other *prameyas* too (*sva-viṣayaparaviṣayasamgrhitaiḥ*). Nor are they established accidentally. Nor again are they established by a combination of the causes mentioned before (*samuccayenaiteṣāṃ kāraṇānāṃ pūrvoddiṣṭānāṃ*), whatever their number: twenty, thirty, forty or twenty-six<sup>4</sup>. – In these circumstances, your statement: ‘Because the things to be cognized are to be obtained through the means of true cognition (*pramāṇādhigamyatvāt prameyāṇāṃ bhāvānāṃ*), those things to be cognized (*prameyā bhāvāḥ*) exist as well as those means of true cognition through which those things to be cognized are obtained (*santi ca te prameyā bhāvās tāni ca pramāṇāni yais te pramāṇaiḥ prameyā bhāvāḥ samadhigatā iti*)’, is not valid.

<sup>1</sup> I do not see how the correction suggested by Arnold Kunst in his *Preface*, p. 101, can be accepted.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *MK.* I, 1:

*na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyāṃ nāpy ahetutaḥ/  
utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kvacana kecana||*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 225, n. 1 on v. V.

<sup>4</sup> What is the meaning of these numbers, and especially of the number twenty-six, which closes the series? We obtain, in fact, the number twenty, if we combine the causes enumerated above, up to ‘another testimony’. Perhaps the author wants, first, to increase that number by ten, then that number again by ten, and finally to multiply twenty by some number. Instead of *ṣaṭvīṃśatī* (sic), I am tempted to read *śatavīṃśatī* ‘hundred times twenty’. All that, of course, is mere conjecture.

[Refutation of the fourth objection; see v. VII]

**LII.** If people conversant with the state of things<sup>1</sup> say that the good things have a good intrinsic nature, that has to be stated in detail (*evaṃ pravibhāgenābhidheyaḥ syāt*).

People conversant with the state of things think that the good things have a good intrinsic nature. But that has to be stated by you in detail: this is that good intrinsic nature; these are those good things; this is that good consciousness (*kuśalaṃ vijñānam*); this is that intrinsic nature of the good consciousness (*kuśalavijñānasvabhāva*), and so on (*evaṃ sarveṣāṃ*). This, however, is not seen to be so (*na caitad evaṃ dṛṣṭam*). Thus your statement that the intrinsic nature of each individual thing has been explained (*yathāsvam upadiṣṭaḥ*) is not valid.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. v. VII.



**LIII.** Besides, if that good intrinsic nature of the good things originates dependently (*pratītya utpadyate*), it is an extrinsic nature (*parabhāva*). How can it be thus an intrinsic nature (*svabhāva evaṃ katham bhavati*)?

Besides, if the intrinsic nature of the good things originates in dependence upon the cause-condition complex (*hetupratyayasāmagrīṃ pratītyotpadyate*), how can that nature, being born of an extrinsic nature (*parabhāvād utpannaḥ*), be the intrinsic nature of the good things? The same holds true of the bad and other things (*evaṃ evākuśalaprabhṛtīnām*). – In these circumstances, your statement that the good intrinsic nature of the good things has been explained, as well as the bad intrinsic nature of the bad things, and so on, is not valid.

**LIV.** Now, if [you think:] that intrinsic nature of the good things originates without depending on anything (*na pratītya kiṃcit*), then there would be no practice of monasticism *brahmacarya* (*evaṃ syād vāso na brahmacaryasya*)<sup>1</sup>.

Now, if you think that the good intrinsic nature of the good things originates without depending on anything, and that the same is true of the bad intrinsic nature of the bad things and of the indeterminate (*avyākṛta*) intrinsic nature of the indeterminate things, then there is no practice of monasticism (*evaṃ sati abrahmacaryavāso bhavati*). – Why? – Because, if this is so, one rejects Dependent Origination (*pratītyasamutpādasya hy evaṃ sati pratyākhyānaṃ bhavati*). By rejecting Dependent Origination, one rejects the vision of Dependent Origination (*pratītyasamutpādasya pratyākhyānāt pratītyasamutpādadarśanapratyākhyānaṃ bhavati*). For if Dependent Origination does not exist, there can be no question of its vision (*na hy avidyamānasya pratītyasamutpādasya darśanam upapadyamānaṃ bhavati*). If there is no vision of Dependent Origination, there is no vision of Dharma. For the Lord has said: ‘O monks, one who sees the *pratītyasamutpāda* sees the Dharma’<sup>2</sup>. [And] if one does not see the Dharma, there is no practice of monasticism (*dharmadarśanābhāvād brahmacaryavāsābhavaḥ*).

Or, rejecting Dependent Origination, one rejects the origination of sorrow (*atha vā pratītyasamutpādapratyākhyānād duḥkhasamudayapratyākhyānaṃ bhavati*). For Dependent Origination is the origination of sorrow (*pratītyasamutpādo hi duḥkhasya samudayaḥ*). By rejecting the origination of sorrow, one rejects sorrow (*duḥkhasamudayasya pratyāk-*

*hyānād duḥkha-pratyākhyānaṃ bhavati*). For, if there is no origination, how will sorrow originate (*asati hi samudaye tat kuto duḥkhaṃ samu-deṣyati*)? If sorrow and [its] origination are rejected, then the cessation (*nirodha*) of sorrow is rejected. For, if there is no origination of sorrow, what will come to cease by 'cessation' *nirvāṇa* (*kasya prahāṇān nirodho bhaviṣyati*)? [And] if the cessation of sorrow is rejected, the Way (*mārga*) is rejected. For, if there is no cessation of sorrow, for obtaining what will there be a Way leading to the cessation of sorrow (*kasya prāptaye mārgo bhaviṣyati duḥkhanirodhagāmī*)? Thus, the Four Noble Truths will cease to exist (*evaṃ caturṇāṃ āryasatyānāṃ abhāvaḥ*). If they do not exist, there is no result of monastic life (*śrāmaṇyaphala*). For it is through the vision of [those] Truths that the results of monastic life are attained (*satyadarśanāc chrāmaṇyaphalāni hi samadhi-gamyante*). [And] if the results of monastic life do not exist, there is no practice of monasticism.

<sup>1</sup> Apparently, the Mādhyamika's assertion that all things are void ruins the foundation of all religious practice. But the Mādhyamika says in reply that it is on the contrary if things are *not void*, that all religious practice becomes meaningless. Voidness is 'dependent origination' (*pratītyasamutpāda*). But if there is no 'dependent origination', then there is no sorrow, no origination of sorrow, and, for that reason, no destruction of sorrow and no way leading to that destruction. Everything is immutable, free from the vicissitudes of the empirical world, being the Absolute itself. Thus, if Voidness is not admitted, the Four Noble Truths, which constitute the foundation of all religious practice in Buddhism, cannot be understood. – The whole thing has to be read along with *MK. XXIV* (cf. E. Frauwallner's introduction to his translation of this chapter, in *Die Philosophie des Buddhismus* [Berlin, 1956], pp. 187ff). See also p. 218 above, and the concluding verse of our treatise.

<sup>2</sup> This is a quotation from the *Śālistamba-Sūtra* (cf. *Mahāyāna-Sūtra-Saṃgraha* I (ed. by P. L. Vaidya), [Darbhanga, 1961], p. 100). For the Pāli version see *Majjhima-Nikāya* I, pp. 190–1 (Pāli Text Society edition). – *Dharma*, as equivalent to *pratītya-samutpāda*, does not mean the Absolute Truth (in which there is no dependent origination: cf. *supra*, p. 218), but is only a *negative expression* of the Absolute. Cf. my forthcoming book entitled *L'ātman-brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris).

Furthermore:

**LV.** There would be neither merit (*dharma*) nor demerit (*adharma*) nor the worldly conventions (*saṃvya-vahārāś ca laukikāḥ*). All things being endowed with an intrinsic nature, would be permanent – for that which has no cause is permanent (*nityāś ca sasvabhāvāḥ syur nityatvād ahetu-mataḥ*).

If this is so, what defect follows for you who reject Dependent Origi-

nation (*evaṃ sati pratyāsamutpādaṃ pratyācakṣāṇasya bhavataḥ ko doṣaḥ prasajyate*)? – There is no merit. There is no demerit. Nor do exist the worldly conventions. – Why? – Because all those are dependently originated; how will they be, if there is no dependent origination (*pratyāsamutpannaṃ hy etat sarvaṃ; asati pratyāsamutpāde kuto bhaviṣyati*)? Moreover, being endowed with an intrinsic nature (*sasvabhāva*), not dependently originated (*apratyāsamutpanna*) and devoid of a cause (*nirhetuka*), it would be permanent (*nitya*). – Why? – Because things that have no cause are permanent (*nirhetukā hi bhāvā nityāḥ*). – There would thus follow that very non-practice of monasticism (*sa eva cābrahmacaryavāsaḥ prasajyeta*). And you would contradict your own tenet (*svasiddhāntavirodhaś ca*)<sup>1</sup>. – Why? – Because the Lord has taught that all conditioned things are impermanent (*anityā hi bhagavatā sarve saṃskārā nirdiṣṭāḥ*). They become permanent, because they are [supposed to be] endowed with an intrinsic nature and hence [to be] permanent (*te sasvabhāvanityatvān nityā hi bhavanti*).

<sup>1</sup> I do not see why we *should* conclude from this that the objection formulated in v. VII springs from a Hinayānist (cf. p. 226, above). The Naiyāyika realist, who uses against Nāgārjuna, a Buddhist, the standpoint of the Buddhist realists, must also accept their tenet – in order to be consistent with himself. Nāgārjuna here uses against his opponent what is commonly regarded as the essence of the Buddha's teaching, namely that all things are impermanent (*anitya*).

**LVI.** And the same defect exists also with regard to the bad things, to the indeterminate things, to those things which lead to emancipation, and so on (*nairyāṇikādiṣu*). Thus, all that is conditioned becomes for you unconditioned (*tasmāt sarvaṃ saṃskṛtaṃ asaṃskṛtaṃ te bhavaty eva*).

And the rule that has been indicated, concerning the good things (*yaś caiśa kuśaleṣu dharmeṣu nirdiṣṭaḥ kalpaḥ*), applies also to the bad things, to the indeterminate things, to those things which lead to emancipation, and so on (*nairyāṇikaprabhṛtiṣu*). Thus all that, though conditioned, turns out to be unconditioned for you (*tasmāt te sarvaṃ idaṃ saṃskṛtaṃ asaṃskṛtaṃ saṃpadyate*). – Why? – Because, there being no cause, there is no origination, no subsistence and no destruction (*hetau hy asaty utpādashthitibhaṅgā na bhavanti*). [And] there being no origination, no subsistence and no destruction, all that is conditioned turns out to be unconditioned, because of the absence of the specific character of the conditioned (*saṃskṛtalakṣaṇābhāvāt*). – In these circumstances, your state-

ment that all things are non-void because the good and other things have an intrinsic nature (*kuṣalādīnām bhāvānām svabhāvasadbhāvād aśūnyāḥ sarvabhāvā iti*), is not valid.

[Refutation of the fifth objection; v. IX].

**LVII.** One who says that the name (*nāman*)<sup>1</sup> is existent (*sadbhūta*), deserves indeed the answer from you: 'There is an intrinsic nature'<sup>2</sup>. We, however, do not say that (*brūmaś ca na vyaṃ tat*).

One who says that the name is existent, deserves the answer from you: 'There is an intrinsic nature'. That intrinsic nature, which is designated by the existent name, must also be, for that reason, existent (*yasya sadbhūtaṃ nāma svabhāvasya tasmāt tenāpi svabhāvena sadbhūtena bhavita-vyam*). For a non-existent intrinsic nature cannot have an existent name (*na hy asadbhūtasya svabhāvasya sadbhūtaṃ nāma bhavati*). We, however, do not say that the name is existent. Since the things have no intrinsic nature, that name also is devoid of an intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*). For that reason, it is void (*śūnya*), and, being void, it is non-existent (*asadbhūta*). – In these circumstances, your statement that because of the existence of the name (*nāmasadbhāvāt*) the intrinsic nature is existent (*sadbhūtaḥ svabhāvaḥ*), is not valid.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. v. IX.

<sup>2</sup> *sasvabhāva ity evaṃ bhavatā prativaktavyo nāma*. – *sasvabhāva* here is used as the opposite of *niḥsvabhāva* or *asvabhāva* 'absence of intrinsic nature' (vv. IX, LIX). Let us remember that according to the opponent, there can be no name without an object. The name 'absence of intrinsic nature' proves, therefore, that very intrinsic nature which it is supposed to deny. The Mādhyamika's reply to this is that the name 'absence of intrinsic nature' does not exist any more than the proposition 'All things are void' (*supra*, p. 217).

Furthermore:

**LVIII.** Does this name 'non-existent' designate something existent or non-existent (*nāmāsad iti ca yad idaṃ tat kiṃ nu sato bhavaty utāpy asataḥ*)? Be it the name of an existent or of a non-existent thing, in both ways your proposition is abandoned (*yadi hi sato yady asato dvidhāpi te hīyate vādaḥ*).

Does this name 'non-existent' designate something existent or non-existent? Be it the name of an existent or of a non-existent thing, in both

ways the proposition (*pratijñā*) is abandoned. If [the thing named is] existent, the proposition [“The name is:” “Non-existent”] is abandoned. For the same thing cannot be now non-existent, now existent (*na hīdānīm tad asad idānīm sat*). If, on the other hand, [you say that] the thing named is non-existent, [it has to be replied:] that which is non-existent has no name (*asadbhūtasya nāma na bhavati*)<sup>1</sup>. – Thus your proposition that the name has an existent intrinsic nature is abandoned (*tasmād yā pratijñā nāmmaḥ sadbhūtaḥ svabhāva iti sā hīnā*)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For the text cf. Kunst’s *Preface*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> For the opponent, even the name ‘non-existent’ is existent. But, for the Mādhyamika, it involves a self-contradiction. See also on this self-contradiction, B. K. Matilal ‘Reference and Existence in Nyāya and Buddhist Logic’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 1, *op. cit.* pp. 90–93.

**LIX.** We have already established the voidness of all things (*sarveṣāṃ bhāvānāṃ śūnyatvaṃ copapāditaṃ pūrvam*). This criticism, therefore, turns out to be one of something which is not [my] proposition (*sa upālambhas tasmād bhavaty ayaṃ cāpratijñāyāḥ*).

Here we have already established in detail (*vistarataḥ*) the voidness of all things. Even the name has already been stated to be void. Now you, assuming non-voidness, have returned to the charge (*sa bhavān aśūnyatvaṃ pariṅghya parivṛtto vaktum*): If the things had no intrinsic nature, then even this name ‘absence of intrinsic nature’ would not exist (*yadī bhāvānāṃ svabhāvo na syād asvabhāva iti nāmāpīdaṃ na syād iti*). For this reason, your criticism is directed against something which is not a proposition [to criticize] (*tasmād apratijñopālambho ’yaṃ bhavataḥ saṃpadyate*)<sup>1</sup>. We do not say, indeed, that the name is existent (*na hi vayaṃ nāma sadbhūtaṃ iti brūmaḥ*).

<sup>1</sup> Because the Mādhyamika has no ‘proposition’ at all.

Now about your statement [contained in v. X]:

**LX.** ‘Now [you may say:] There is an intrinsic nature, but that does not belong to the things’ – this suspicion of yours is not shared by us (*idaṃ āśaṅkitaṃ yad uктаṃ bhavaty anāśaṅkitaṃ tac ca*).

We do not, indeed, deny the intrinsic nature of the things (*na hi vayaṃ dharmāṇāṃ svabhāvaṃ pratiśedhayāmaḥ*). Nor do we affirm the intrinsic nature of a certain object apart from the things (*dharmavinirmuktasya vā*

*kasyacid arthasya svabhāvam abhyupagacchāmaḥ*). Now, this being so, your criticism: 'If the things are devoid of an intrinsic nature, you should explain to what other object, apart from the things, there now happens to belong the intrinsic nature' (*kasya khalv idānim anyasyārthasya dharmavinirmuktasya svabhāvo bhavati*), is thrown far away (*dūrāpakṛṣṭam evaitad bhavati*). It is no criticism at all (*upālabho na bhavati*)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> As we shall see later on (v. LXIV), Nāgārjuna does not 'deny' anything; he only 'makes known' the voidness of the things.

[Refutation of the sixth objection; see v. XI].

**LXI.** If [it is true that] negation is only of an existent<sup>1</sup>, this voidness is established (*śūnyatvaṃ nanu prasiddham idam*) – for you negate the things' being devoid of an intrinsic nature (*pratiśedhayate hi bhavān bhāvānām niḥsvabhāvatvaṃ*).

If negation is only of the existent and not of the non-existent (*yadi sata eva pratiśedho bhavati nāsataḥ*), and if you negate the being-devoid-of-an-intrinsic-nature of all things (*bhavāṃś ca sarvabhāvānām niḥsvabhāvatvaṃ pratiśedhayati*), the being-devoid-of-an-intrinsic-nature of all things is established (*nanu prasiddhaṃ sarvabhāvānām niḥsvabhāvatvaṃ*). Since, in virtue of your statement (*tadvacanena*), negation exists (*pratiśedhasadbhāvāt*), and since the being-devoid-of-an-intrinsic-nature of all things has been negated (*niḥsvabhāvatvasya ca sarvabhāvānām pratiśiddhatvāt*), voidness is established (*prasiddhā śūnyatā*).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. v. XI.

**LXII.** Now, if you negate voidness, and if that voidness does not exist (*pratiśedhayase 'tha tvaṃ śūnyatvaṃ tac ca nāsti śūnyatvaṃ*), your proposition that negation is of an existent is abandoned (*pratiśedhaḥ sata iti te nanv eṣa viḥtyate vādaḥ*).

Now, if you negate the being-devoid-of-an-intrinsic-nature of all things, i.e. their voidness, and if that voidness does not exist, then your proposition that negation is of an existent and not of a non-existent, is abandoned<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The Mādhyamika here uses the opponent's own logic against him. If the latter's proposition that a significant negation is only of an existent, is right, then he proves the Mādhyamika's position, by proving the voidness he negates. If, on the other hand, the voidness he negates does not exist, then he abandons his own proposition.

Besides:

**LXIII.** I do not negate anything, nor is there anything to be negated (*pratiṣedhayāmi nāhaṃ kiṃcit pratiṣedhyam asti na ca kiṃcit*). You, therefore, calumniate me when you say: 'You negate' (*tasmāt pratiṣedhayasīty adhilaya eṣa tvayā kriyate*)<sup>1</sup>.

You could rightly say that, if I negated something. I, however, do not negate anything, for there is nothing to be negated (*na caivāhaṃ kiṃcit pratiṣedhayāmi, yasmān na kiṃcit pratiṣeddhavyam asti*). Thus, while, all things being void, there is neither a thing to be negated (*pratiṣedhya*) nor a negation (*pratiṣedha*), you make an absurd calumny (*aprastuto 'dhilayaḥ*) when you say: 'You negate'.

<sup>1</sup> *adhilaya* 'calumny' has been recorded so far only in *MK.* (F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953], s.v.).

Now about your statement [contained in v. XII], I say:

**LXIV.** Regarding your assertion that the statement of the negation of the non-existent is established without words (*rte vacanād asataḥ pratiṣedhavadvacanasiddhir iti*), we observe: Here speech makes it known as non-existent, it does not deny it (*atra jñāpayate vāg asad iti tan na pratinihanti*).

Regarding your statement: 'The negation of the non-existent is established even without words; what purpose is, therefore, served by your statement, "All things are devoid of an intrinsic nature"?' (*tatra kiṃ niḥsvabhāvāḥ sarvabhāvā ity etat tvadvacanam karoti*), we observe: This statement, 'All things are devoid of an intrinsic nature', does not make all things devoid of an intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāvāḥ sarvabhāvā ity etat khalu vacanam na niḥsvabhāvān eva sarvabhāvān karoti*). But, since there is no intrinsic nature (*asati svabhāve*), it makes known (*jñāpayati*) that the things are devoid of an intrinsic nature (*bhāvā niḥsvabhāvā iti*). Here is an example: When Devadatta is not in the house, somebody says that Devadatta is in the house (*avidyamānagrhe Devadatte 'sti grhe Devadatta iti*)<sup>1</sup>. Somebody else tells him: 'He is not [in the house]'. That statement does not create Devadatta's non-existence, but only makes known Devadatta's non-existence in the house (*na tad vacanam Devadattasyāsadbhāvam karoti, kiṃ tu jñāpayati kevalam asaṃbhavam grhe Devadattasya*). Similarly this statement, 'The things have no intrinsic nature', does not make the being-devoid-of-an-intrinsic-nature of the things, but makes

known the absence of the intrinsic nature in all things (*na bhāvānāṃ niḥsvabhāvatvaṃ karoti, kiṃ tu sarvabhāveṣu svabhāvasyābhāvaṃ jñāpayati*). – In these circumstances, your statement: ‘If there is no intrinsic nature, what purpose is served by this statement, “There is no intrinsic nature”?’ The absence of an intrinsic nature is established even without words’, is not appropriate (*na yuktam*)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> ‘*avidyamānagrha* is a curious compound but occurs in other texts’. (Edition, p. 146, n. 14).

<sup>2</sup> Nāgārjuna is not unaware of the weight of the Naiyāyika’s objection. It, however, does not apply to him, for he does not negate anything but only ‘makes known’ the voidness, i.e. the ‘dependent origination’, of the things, where people wrongly see their non-voidness.

[Refutation of the seventh objection; see v. XIII].

**LXV.** You have introduced a great deliberation (*mahāṃś carcaḥ*) with the example of the mirage<sup>1</sup>. Listen to the decision in that matter (*tatrāpi nirṇayaṃ śṛṇu*) [and see] how that example is appropriate (*yathā sa dṛṣṭānta upapannaḥ*).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. v. XIII.

[The commentary is a mere paraphrase.]

**LXVI.** If that perception were by its own nature, it would not be dependently originated (*sa yadi svabhāvataḥ syād grāho na syāt pratītya sambhūtaḥ*). That perception, however, which comes into existence dependently is voidness indeed (*yaś ca pratītya bhavati grāho nanu śūnyatā saiva*).

If that perception of a mirage as water (*mṛgaṭṛṣṇāyāṃ sa yathājalagrāhaḥ*)<sup>1</sup> were by its own nature, it would not be dependently originated. Since [,however,] it comes into existence in dependence upon the mirage, the wrong sight (*viparītaṃ darśanam*) and the distracted attention (*ayoniśamanaskāra*), it is dependently originated (*pratītyasamutpanna*). And since it is dependently originated, it is indeed void by its own nature (*svabhāvataḥ śūnya eva*) – as previously stated (*yathā pūrvam uktam tathā*).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 229, n. 1.

Furthermore:

**LXVII.** If that perception were by its own nature, who would remove that perception (*kas taṃ nivartayed grāham*)? The same rule applies to



the rest [of the things] too (*śeṣeṣv apy eṣa vidhiḥ*). Hence this is a non-criticism (*tasmād eṣo 'nupālambhaḥ*).

If the perception of water in a mirage (*mṛgaṭṭṛṣṇāyām jalagrāhaḥ*) were by its own nature, who would remove it? An intrinsic nature cannot be removed (*na hi svabhāvaḥ śakyo vinivartayitum*): e.g., the heat of fire, the fluidity of water, the openness (*nirāvaraṇatva*) of space<sup>1</sup>. Its removal, however, is seen (*dṛṣṭam cāsy vinivartanam*). The intrinsic nature of the perception, therefore, is void (*tasmāc chūnyasvabhāvo grāhaḥ*). The same rule (*krama*) is to be understood (*pratyavagantavya*) with regard to the rest of the things too (*śeṣeṣv api dharmeṣu*), viz., the five things starting from the object to be perceived (*grāhyaprabhṛtiṣu pañcasu*)<sup>2</sup>. – In these circumstances, your statement that all things are non-void because of the existence of the aggregate of six (*ṣaṭkabhāvāt*), is not valid<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *MK. XXIII*, 24, with Candrakīrti's comment.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. v. *XIV*.

<sup>3</sup> According to the realist, the Mādhyamika cannot avoid the difficulty he has been put into, even by affirming that, in saying 'All things are devoid of an intrinsic nature', he only negates a wrong perception of a non-existent, comparable to the perception of water in a mirage. For even when one claims to negate a wrong perception of a non-existent, one is bound to admit the six things, viz., the perception, the object to be perceived, the perceiver, the negation, the object to be negated, and the negator (v. *XIV*). – The Mādhyamika's rejoinder to this is that the opponent's criticism springs from a misunderstanding of the meaning of 'being devoid of an intrinsic nature'. When the Mādhyamika says that all things are 'devoid of an intrinsic nature' or 'void', he does not at all mean to say that they are non-existent, but only that they are 'dependently originated'. The six things of which the opponent speaks exist *only insofar as they are dependently originated* (cf. *supra*, p. 247, n. 1).

Perhaps we may pursue our elucidation of this passage further. Nāgārjuna does not confound truth and error. He can distinguish just as a realist can between delusive and non-delusive perceptions, and by the same criteria. The heat of fire, the fluidity of water, and so on, are not just the same thing as the perception of water in a mirage. The latter is erroneous and hence can be removed by a knowing person, whereas the truth of the former is not questioned by anybody in the world. But when Nāgārjuna says that the heat of fire is an 'intrinsic nature' (*svabhāva*), he does not mean to say that it is so in an absolute sense. The heat of fire, too, is 'dependently originated' (cf. Candrakīrti, *MKV.*, pp. 260ff.). Truth and error have this in common, that both are 'dependently originated'. The example of the mirage has been chosen because it is the most comprehensive, including as it does not only the perception, the object to be perceived and the perceiver, but also the negation, the object to be negated and the negator. Empirically speaking, all these exist, being related to one another; but in an absolute sense, none of these can be said to exist – for the very same reason that they are 'dependently originated'.

Thus, the doctrine of voidness has a twofold function: on one hand, it establishes the empirical reality; on the other, it points to the Beyond.

[Refutation of the eighth objection; see v. XVII].

**LXVIII.** The case being the same (*śamatvāt*), we have already answered by what precedes [the objection of] absence of reason (*hetvabhāva*), which was stated in [your] refutation of the example of the mirage (*mṛgaṭṛṣṇādr̥ṣṭāntavyāvṛttividhau ya uktaḥ prāk*)<sup>1</sup>.

It should be understood (*avagantavya*) that by the preceding deliberation (*carcena pūrvoktena*) we have also answered [the objection of] absence of reason. The same deliberation regarding the negation of the aggregate of six (*ṣaṭkapraṭiśedha*), which was stated in the preceding reason (*pūrvasmin hetau*), should also be considered here (*ihāpi carcayitavyaḥ*)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. v. XVII.

<sup>2</sup> Why are all things 'void' or 'devoid of an intrinsic nature'? The Mādhyamika's 'reason' is that they are 'dependently originated' (*pratītyasamutpanna*). Put in the standard Naiyāyika form of syllogistic inference (*anumāna*), it comes to this:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| (1) <i>Pratijñā</i>  | <i>niḥsvabhāvāḥ sarvabhāvāḥ</i>   |
| (Proposition):       | (All things are devoid of an intrinsic nature).   |
| (2) <i>Hetu</i>      | <i>pratītyasamutpannatvāt</i>   |
| (Reason):            | (Because of being dependently originated).  |
| (3) <i>Udāharana</i> | <i>yat pratītyasamutpannam tan niḥsvabhāvaṃ dṛṣṭam: yathā</i>   |
| (Exemplification):   | <i>mṛgaṭṛṣṇāyām jalagrāhaḥ</i>  |
|                      | (What is dependently originated is seen to be devoid of an intrinsic nature: for example, the perception of water in a mirage). |
| (4) <i>Upanaya</i>   | <i>tathā ca pratītyasamutpannāḥ sarvabhāvāḥ</i>   |
| (Application):       | (And even so are all things dependently originated).  |
| (5) <i>Nigamana</i>  | <i>tasmāt pratītyasamutpannatvān niḥsvabhāvāḥ sarvabhāvāḥ</i>   |
| (Conclusion):        | (Therefore, because of being dependently originated, all things are devoid of an intrinsic nature).                             |

Unlike Bhāvaviveka, a later Mādhyamika, Nāgārjuna does not show any predilection for 'independent inference' (*svatantrānumāna*), for he has no 'position' to defend. His 'position' is, in fact, a 'no-position'. He expresses the Inexpressible. And the best way for him to refute his opponent's criticisms is to show the contradictions inherent in the latter's own way of thought (cf. *supra*, p. 217 and n. 3). He is a *prāsaṅgika*, not a *svātantrika*. However, he cannot be accused of not vindicating his position from the standpoint of formal logic. – Cf. Candrakīrti's remarks on Buddhapaṇita, a strict follower of Nāgārjuna (*MKV.*, pp. 20–21; Th. Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa* [Leningrad, 1927], pp. 99ff.).

[Refutation of the ninth objection].

**LXIX.** We have already answered [the question relating to] the reason [for a negation] in the three times (*traikālyā*)<sup>1</sup>, for the case is the same (*śamatvāt*). And a counter-reason for the three times (*traikālyapratihetu*)

is obtained for the upholders of the doctrine of voidness (*śūnyatāvādinām prāptaḥ*).

It has to be understood (*pratyavagantavya*) that the question why a negation is possible in the three times (*hetus traikālye pratiśedhavācī*) has already received its answer (*uktottaraḥ*). – Why? – Because the reason is of the same nature as the object to be established (*sādhyaśamatvāt*). In virtue of your statement (*tvadvacanena*), a negation is not possible in the three times, and, like the negation, the thing to be negated, also, does not exist<sup>2</sup>. Thus, there being no negation and no object to be negated (*pratiśedhapratiśedhye 'sati*), your opinion that the negation has been negated (*yad bhavān manyate pratiśedhaḥ pratiśiddha iti*), is untenable. That very reason which expresses a negation of the three times is obtained for the upholders of the doctrine of voidness, for they negate the intrinsic nature of all things, – not for you (*yas trikālapratiśedhavācī hetur eṣa eva śūnyatāvādinām prāptaḥ sarvabhāvasvabhāvapratiśedhakatvān na bhavataḥ*)<sup>3</sup>.

Or it has been answered in the following way:

'I do not negate anything, nor is there anything to be negated. You, therefore, calumniate me when you say: "You negate"'<sup>4</sup>.

Now, if you think: the negation is established in all the three times (*triṣv api kāleṣu pratiśedhaḥ siddhaḥ*); we see the antecedent cause, the subsequent cause, and the simultaneous cause (*drṣṭaḥ pūrvakālino 'pi hetuḥ, uttarakālino 'pi, yugapatkālino 'pi hetuḥ*): antecedent cause, e.g., the father as the cause of the son; subsequent cause, e.g., the disciple as the cause of the teacher; simultaneous cause, e.g., the lamp as the cause of the light, – we reply: this is not so. For in this way are stated the former defects (*uktā hy etasmin krame trayaḥ pūrvadoṣāḥ*)<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, if this is so, you admit the existence of a negation, and you abandon your proposition (*api ca yady evam, pratiśedhasadbhāvas tvayābhyupagamyate, pratiññāhāniś ca te bhavati*); the negation of an intrinsic nature is also established in this way (*etena krameṇa svabhāvapratiśedho 'pi siddhaḥ*).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. v. XX, and *Nyāyasūtra* II. 1. 12, quoted above, p. 231, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Read: *pratiśedhas traikālye 'nupapannaḥ, pratiśedhavat sa pratiśedhyo 'pi*.

<sup>3</sup> For the realist, a negation is not possible in all the three times (cf. v. XX). The Mādhyamika uses his opponent's own argument to prove that, if the latter's contention is valid, he cannot negate the Mādhyamika's negation. The Mādhyamika himself, however, is safe in his position, for he holds that the three times are as void as all the other things (cf. *MK. XIX*). [Note the way in which Nāgārjuna uses the two expressions: *hetus traikālye pratiśedhavācī* 'reason expressing a negation in the three times', and *trikālapratiśedhavācī hetuḥ* 'reason [for a negation in the three times] which expres-

ses a negation of the three times'.]—On *sādhyasama* cf. *supra*, p. 237, n. 2 on v. XXVIII.

<sup>4</sup> V. LXIII above.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. v. XX.

**LXX.** All things prevail for one for whom prevails this voidness (*prabhavati ca śūnyateyaṃ yasya prabhavanti tasya sarvārthāḥ*). Nothing prevails for one for whom voidness does not prevail (*prabhavati na tasya kiṃcin na prabhavati śūnyatā yasya*)<sup>1</sup>.

For one for whom this voidness prevails, all things – mundane and supramundane (*sarvārthā laukikalokottarāḥ*) – prevail. – Why? – Because Dependent Origination prevails for one for whom voidness prevails. The Four Noble Truths prevail for one for whom Dependent Origination prevails. The results of monastic life as well as all special acquisitions (*viśeṣādhigama*)<sup>2</sup> prevail for one for whom the Four Noble Truths prevail. The Three Jewels (*trīṇi ratnāni*), viz., the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṃgha, prevail for one for whom all the special acquisitions prevail. For one for whom Dependent Origination prevails, merit (*dharma*), the cause of merit (*dharmaḥetu*), the result of merit (*dharmaḥphala*), demerit (*adharma*), the cause of demerit (*adharmaḥetu*), the result of demerit (*adharmaḥphala*), – all these prevail. For one for whom merit and demerit, the causes of merit and demerit and the results of merit and demerit prevail, passion (*kleśa*)<sup>3</sup>, the origination of passion (*kleśasamudaya*) and the objective grounds of passion (*kleśavastūni*)<sup>4</sup> prevail. For one for whom all that prevails (*yasyaitat sarvaṃ prabhavati pūrvoktam*), the law concerning the happy and the unhappy states (*sugatidurgativyavasthā*), the attainment of those states (*sugatidurgatigamana*), the way leading to those states (*sugatidurgatigāmī mārgaḥ*), the act of passing beyond those states (*sugatidurgativyatikramaṇa*), the means of passing beyond those states (*sugatidurgativyatikramaṇopāya*), and all worldly conventions (*sarvasaṃvyavahārāś ca laukikāḥ*) are established (*vyavasthāpitāḥ*). They are to be understood individually by each person, following this direction (*svayam adhi-gantavyā anayā diśā*): a part [only] can be taught in words (*kiṃcic chaky-aṇi vacanenopadeṣṭum*).

Here again,

I adore that incomparable Buddha (*tam apratimabuddham*) who taught Voidness, Dependent Origination and the Middle Way as equivalent (*ekārtha*)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *MK.* XXIV, 14:

*sarvaṃ ca yujyate tasya śūnyatā yasya yujyate/  
sarvaṃ na yujyate tasya śūnyam yasya na yujyate//*

Concluding the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* with this verse, Nāgārjuna shows that his doctrine of voidness does not reject the empirical world. On the contrary, it establishes on a solid foundation all our activities in the empirical world. – See above, p. 218; p. 247, n. 1; p. 257, n. 3; vv. LIV–LVI.

<sup>2</sup> On this term cf. J. May, *Candrakīrti: Prasannapadā Madhyamakavṛtti* (Douze chapitres traduits du sanscrit et du tibétain...) [Paris, 1959], n. 828.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *MK.* XXIII.

<sup>4</sup> On *vastu* cf. *MK.* XXIII, 7, with Candrakīrti's comment (May, *op. cit.*, p. 185 and n. 603).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *MK.* XXIV, 18, quoted on p. 220, n. 10, above.

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